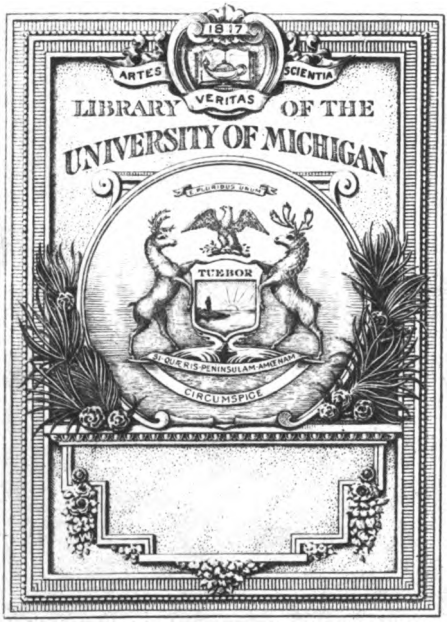
This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google books

https://books.google.com

A 521876

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

828
W2546

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

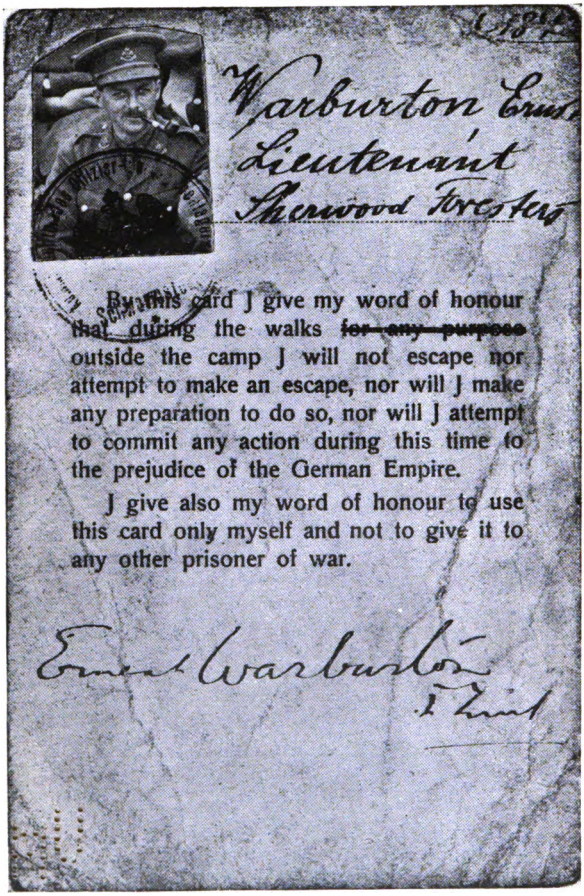
Digitized by Google

BEHIND BOCHE BARS

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google


Warburton Ernst
Lieutenant
Sherwood Foresters
By this card I give my word of honour that during the walks ~~for any purpose~~ outside the camp I will not escape nor attempt to make an escape, nor will I make any preparation to do so, nor will I attempt to commit any action during this time to the prejudice of the German Empire.
I give also my word of honour to use this card only myself and not to give it to any other prisoner of war.
Ernst Warburton
Lt

PAROLE GIVEN FOR WALKS OUTSIDE THE CAMP AT SCHWARMSTEDT, 1917

Digitized by Google

BEHIND BOCHE BARS

BY ERNEST WARBURTON
(LIEUTENANT SHERWOOD FORESTERS)

WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON: JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD
NEW YORK: JOHN LANE COMPANY MCMXX

Digitized by Google

The Mayflower Press, Plymouth, England. William Brendon & Son, Ltd.

Digitized by Google

TO

MY WIFE

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

ILLUSTRATIONS

Parole given for Walks outside the Camp at Schwarmstedt . . . . . *Frontispiece*

TO FACE PAGE

Prisoners of War at Verden Hospital, 1917 . . . 28

Officer Prisoners at Karlsruhe, 1917 46

British Officers interned at Mürren, Switzerland, 1918 110

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BEHIND BOCHE BARS

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BEHIND BOCHE BARS

CHAPTER I

NOTHING was further from my mind than that I should be taken prisoner by the Germans.

I was leading a raid into the enemy trenches on a wet October night in 1916; quite a small affair—such as we had every few nights in some part of the line. We were just reaching the German parapet when I was "dropped" in the wire by a bomb which was quickly followed by three others —I got them all!

According to orders my men carried on without me, hoping to pick me up on their return. I heard—long afterwards—they tried very hard to find me when they came back but missed me in the darkness among

Digitized by Google

the many shell-holes. When dawn broke—I remember praying very hard it would be sunshiny, as the cold was the worst thing I suffered from—I heard a guttural voice, quite close to me, saying :

" Kom in, Kamrad, kom in, eet ees all right ; if you stop teel to-night you will be knocked on the head."

As I could not move, I was unable to accept brother Boche's kind invitation, so willy-nilly I had to " stop teel to-night." However, they did not knock me on the head, but crawled out at dusk with a ground-sheet and very carefully carried me into their trenches. There they gave me plenty of warm—imitation—coffee and bread and cheese ; the latter was a little more than I could manage, as I was not feeling quite up to a hearty meal.

In a dug-out in the front line a man—first showing me the Red Cross on his sleeve—bound up some of my wounds in a rough-and-ready way. Then they carried me—again in a ground-sheet slung on a pole—down the communication trench to the field dressing station, where they cut my clothes off and dressed my wounds a little and gave me an

Digitized by Google

injection of morphia. Next morning I was taken off in a motor-ambulance with iron tyres—due to the shortage of rubber, I suppose—to the Field Hospital where my thirteen months as a *Kriegsgefangener* may be said to have begun.

I hope this little account of my own experiences may prove interesting, and that readers may be able to get a really accurate picture of the life of an officer prisoner of war in Germany. The harrowing accounts that one reads from time to time in the daily papers were, I am sure, true, but as they were only individual episodes I do not think that by reading them it was possible to form a wholly correct impression of prison life. I do not wish to suggest for a moment that the horrible things that happened to some of our prisoners in German hands are not true. I know they are. But they do not give the whole picture. They are not written as a complete account of the treatment.

The Field Hospital I was taken to was at Vitry, and there they operated on me to get the pieces of metal out, etc.

I was wondering if they were also short of

Digitized by Google

anæsthetics as well as rubber and coffee. This idea gave me furiously to think as I was being laid on the operating table. I just caught sight of my doctor leaning over me ; he was exactly like a Bairnsfather comic picture of a Boche : round spectacles, bristly moustache, rolls of fat on the neck, close-cropped yellow hair sticking straight up from a square head—everything complete ! However, he gave me an anæsthetic so I forgave him his looks.

The whole time I was in the " Fatherland " I never saw another German who looked so exactly like our caricatures of them. I am also pleased to say that I have never seen even one British soldier in the least like their caricatures of us.

My fears about the anæsthetic were not unfounded, as a friend I afterwards made told me that he had an operation for his wounds at Cambrai about the same time which lasted two hours and he had no anæsthetic of any sort.

I stayed at Vitry for three days in a ward with wounded German privates, one of whom had a cake sent him from home which he

Digitized by Google

made a great point of my sharing with him. In fact he refused to take "no" and seemed very hurt, so I accepted some to show there was no ill-feeling, though there certainly was —in one sense—after I had eaten it. It tasted as if it had been made of bran and candle grease, though from subsequent knowledge I am sure nothing so valuable as candle grease had been used in its manufacture.

I was a good deal worried here by the Intelligence Officers who kept trying to get information out of me. The first thing I remember on "coming to" after my operation was a very friendly voice asking me how I felt. The man, who spoke in excellent English with a slight American accent, then proceeded to ask me a good many other things as well. In spite of the fumes of chloroform still in my brain I quickly realized what was happening, and they are quite welcome to all the information they got out of me.

Several different officers tried their hands, or rather their tongues, on me during the first few days, and I must say that most of them were very clever and never lost their tempers when they failed to get any answer. They

Digitized by Google

tried every imaginable trick to induce me to give the number of my brigade and division. When one method failed they left the matter for a time and chatted about other things, and then cleverly led up to it again, trying to catch me into giving it when I was off my guard. They must really have been pretty sure of it before but were wanting confirmation, as in the course of a talk about times he had spent in England when he was a young man the Intelligence Officer said :

" Oh, by the way, I once met your Divisional General, General ——," mentioning the name of the General who had been in command of my division up to a short time before. " A rather nice old gentleman, isn't he ? "

" Who did you say ? " I murmured.

" General —— ? "

" I don't think I've ever met anyone of that name."

This was perfectly true, I having belonged to another division until two months before I was captured.

He then asked me if I would like to write to my wife and gave me paper and pencil.

Digitized by Google

I managed to scrawl a few lines, which he said he would post for me. He then shook hands with me and he and his N.C.O. both left, but the latter came back in a few minutes and said if I would put my brigade number on the letter it would ensure its going, otherwise he was afraid it would not get through. I looked at him and told him to take it away. He smiled and retired. I never saw either the officer or the N.C.O. again, but my wife got the letter six weeks later.

I was then moved to Douai by train on a stretcher in a van like those used for fish, but it had a coke stove in the centre to warm it. There were several Red Cross attendants sitting round the stove smoking cigars or the long German pipes, and they had a habit which rather got on my nerves of spitting over my stretcher through the opening at the side of the van. However, their "elevation" was accurate and nothing ever dropped short.

From the station at Douai to the hospital I had a very uncomfortable journey, in a tram-car fitted up to take stretchers. This would have been all right if it had not been for the narrow gauge and the many street

Digitized by Google

corners to be negotiated, which made progress very jerky.

I was given coffee and bread at the station at Douai by a Red Cross nurse.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II

AT the St. Clothilde Hospital at Douai I was put in a ward with other British officers. It felt almost like coming home! I had been in bed an hour or two here when an N.C.O. came and stood at the foot of my bed and said in a very solemn and impressive manner with a very guttural accent, "Mr. Grey." He said this several times, looking at me intently the whole time. As Grey does not happen to be my name, his remarks did not convey any meaning to me until he coupled the portentous "Mr. Grey" with "Lloyd George—bah!" Then the truth dawned on me that he was, to the best of his ability in an unknown tongue, expressing his strong disapproval of Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Lloyd George, no doubt including the whole British policy as embodied in these statesmen.

The chief doctor at this hospital was not a

Digitized by Google

bad fellow at all in spite of being an over-strict disciplinarian and having a violent temper. These two attributes always go together in the German army, I fancy. The military training appears to encourage both. I remember he always insisted on our "lying at attention" during his daily visits to the wards. This consisted in our having both our arms—provided we had the use of them—stretched straight down by our sides on the outside of the bed-clothes.

A hospital ward in Germany is apparently in perfect order in every way provided the beds are all "dressed by the right." That is, the beds must all be exactly level. I can see the Boche orderly now, crouching down with one eye closed, "taking a sight" down the length of the ward to see if all the beds are flush with one another, making sure that one of them has not taken half a pace to the rear during the night.

This little orderly knew nothing whatever about nursing, but was very anxious to practise on us. We did our best to curb his zeal as much as possible. He used to bring in an enormous bottle containing about five

Digitized by Google

gallons of hydrogen peroxide, or whatever it is that is used for cleansing wounds. He would take the clothes off my bed, then, clutching this bottle under his right arm, he would try to pour a little of its contents into each of my wounds—as I had thirty-six the mattress and I were pretty well soaked before he had done. The weather was very cold and this liquid was icy, and as it trickled over my body I used sometimes to give a little shiver and squeak. This always made him laugh, which caused the bottle to shake and more of the stuff to be spilt haphazard all over the place; more laughter more spilt, more spilt more laughter, and so it went on.

This orderly had another habit which was rather trying to a possibly over-fastidious man: he used to sit thoughtfully for long periods using a large clasp-knife as a tooth-pick, which same knife he was quite ready to use for any other purpose—including that of cutting up the patients' portions of bread.

Another attendant we had for a short time was a very big, strong man but, unfortunately, he was more or less mad—he was away for

Digitized by Google

about a fortnight, having had a very bad attack of "nerves." However, in spite of his peculiarities I rather liked him to carry me in and out of the operating theatre; he was so strong that he always carried me by himself, even sometimes using one arm only whilst he opened the doors, and I found that the less hands that were on me the fewer wounds were touched.

They were very short of cotton for bandages in this hospital—in fact everywhere—so we usually had either no bandages or paper ones. Still, if there was any great necessity for a proper bandage they usually managed to find us some. I was left for several days at a time without any bandages, or any body covering of any sort—other than the bed-clothes—and the discomfort of lying in bed on an old black waterproof sheet with thirty-six bomb wounds discharging can better be imagined than described.

The only two women-nurses in the hospital were employed in the operating theatre. This was really no loss to us as they were quite as incapable as the little orderly. One of them bandaged my head once and each

Digitized by Google

time she put the bandage round it fell off at the back. I pointed this out to her, but she went steadily on, with the result that when I was lifted off the table to be carried back to the ward the bandage remained coiled up on the table. She tried again, and this time to make quite sure she wound it under my chin. It was certainly secure, but so tight that I could not open my mouth to take my food, so one of the other patients took it off for me when I got back to bed. The possibility of missing a meal had to be avoided at all costs!

I was ravenously hungry for the whole eight weeks I was here. The food was very insufficient and consisted of black bread very damp and sour, with sometimes a scraping of pink stuff on it, which they called jam, watery soup, imitation coffee and imitation milk; the latter was the most horrible concoction I have ever tasted. We used to buy from the town cigarettes, very bad tobacco, and sometimes a few apples, and now and then, as a great treat, a small piece of chocolate, which cost five francs—worth 6d. in England. The orderly bought these things for us when

Digitized by Google

he went out, but he often came back not having been able to get them.

Another difficulty in trying to supplement our food supply was that we were very short of money. We only had what happened to be in our pockets when we were captured and an allowance of sixty marks a month, which is debited from our account at Cox's at the rate of £3 per month. Of this sixty marks we only saw from ten to twenty: the remainder was deducted by the Germans for rations. So altogether we were very hard up for food here. When a prisoner reaches a camp where there are a lot of other prisoners who are already getting their parcels from home, he is all right even before his own start to arrive, otherwise he has simply to grin and bear it.

As soon as you are in full swing with your own parcels—which is usually about four months after being captured—you never eat the German food at all, it is really only suitable for pigs. Still, in justice, one must admit that they also go very short themselves. However, whether you eat it or not you have to pay for it.

Digitized by Google

The assistant doctor at this hospital had a brother who was a prisoner of war in France, and he was very kind and did what he could for us. Thinking that I wanted cheering up he presented me one day with a box of halma and a board; these were quite new; he had evidently bought them specially for me. A German officer-priest visited me several times during my stay at Douai, and arranged for me to be carried into the chapel to Mass on Christmas Day.

Two ladies of the French Red Cross were allowed to visit us on Christmas Eve, and they brought presents for all the prisoners—apples, chocolate, cigarettes, etc., which were greatly appreciated. The French women and girls who were employed about the hospital, in the kitchens, etc., were not allowed to enter the prisoners' wards, but very often they used to pop in for a moment when no one was about and drop a bunch of flowers or sometimes a cigar or two on a bed nearest the door and run out again before they were caught.

The Germans provided a Christmas tree in all the wards. This was lit up on Christmas

Digitized by Google

Eve and we duly showed great admiration, which was evidently expected of us. They also had a concert that evening to which the officers who were able to walk were invited; they were given seats one on either side of the Chief, as honoured guests. This head doctor, Major ——, had the entire control of the hospital, and on account of his strictness was greatly feared by the Germans. He was a Catholic and made all arrangements possible for the prisoners to receive the consolations of their religion.

At this concert he made a speech to the hospital staff, pointing out that it was hard for them to be far away from their homes at Christmas time, but that their work here gave them a splendid opportunity of showing Christian charity towards their patients, who were cut off entirely from their homes and families and were prisoners in a foreign land. He struck me as a man doing his best to be just and considerate to us in spite of a very strong personal dislike for English people. If it had not been for his high sense of religious duty I think we might have suffered considerably.

Digitized by Google

Owing to the white bandage round my head, a naturally sallow complexion and an aggressive beard, which I, perforce, had to grow at that time, I was given the nickname of the "Sheikh" by a major in the Australian Infantry who had been for some time in Egypt before coming to Germany via France.

This major was extremely kind to me, as indeed he was to everybody, and it was always a great regret to me that, although we left Douai together on Boxing Day, 1916, we were parted *en route* and I never saw him again in Germany, although I was moved about a great deal. At Douai he was a kind of "prize patient," and was shown off to a meeting of about sixty doctors who came to the hospital for some sort of conference. His cure was supposed to have been a marvellous one, and they asked him to do a sort of "song and dance," so to speak, before this distinguished audience. He also had many beautiful coloured plans of his inside, showing the position of shrapnel bullets, etc., and these always called forth much interest and enthusiasm from any visitors.

Digitized by Google

Many people would have become quite swollen-headed under all this attention, but it never seemed to spoil the major's charming personality.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III

MY next experience was two and a half days' journey in a very well-appointed hospital train. The hospital staff at Douai gave us all a hearty send-off. As it was Christmas time they felt extra kind, I think; at any rate, they all shook hands with us and wished us luck.

I also met with an unique piece of kindness from a German on the train. The food they gave us was better than we had had before, and when I had finished my bean soup I asked for some more; the attendant showed me the empty bucket with signs of regret, then he ran up the car and brought me his own basin, which he had filled last and from which he was just going to have his own dinner. He tried for a long time to persuade me to have this in addition to my own, which I

Digitized by Google

had finished, and seemed quite hurt when I finally refused.

As we neared the Rhine all the attendants became very excited and enthusiastic. They all seem to look upon the Rhine as the embodiment of their beloved Fatherland. We got a little "fed up" with their constant allusions to it: a view of the Rhine seen through a hospital-train window does not greatly enhance the joy felt by British prisoners of war.

At Hanover they carried out the Australian major and the other officers, but left me behind with the N.C.O.'s and men who were going on farther. I felt rather lonely. We all left the train at Verden a Aller, a small garrison town about twenty miles from Hanover. Whilst I was being carried on a stretcher down the platform the man at my head leant over me and said:

"I used to be at Appenrodt's in Oxford Circus; I'm going back after the war. Good old London."

It never seems to occur to a German that he may not be very welcome in England after

Digitized by Google

the war. I sometimes wonder if he understands us better than we do ourselves perhaps!

We were taken to the hospital in a large furniture van without springs, our stretchers laid on the floor of the van; it was a painful journey but, fortunately, not a very long one. We stuck in the mud and snow on the way; the horses were all very weak and emaciated, and a group of young recruits were commandeered to push behind. They did so with a good will and many jeering cries of "*Engländer, Engländer.*"

At last we arrived at the hospital, which was a large dismal barrack among a lot of others. It was snowing heavily and very cold. I was carried into a long stone-floored room very dimly lighted by rather high, heavily barred windows on one side. The other walls were wooden partitions which divided the large ground floor into various wards. There were the usual double row of little iron-frame plank bedsteads with the inevitable German blue-check covers and straw or hay mattresses, or rather sacks.

Digitized by Google

I was very lucky and got two of these sacks through the kindness of a British marine, who was generally looking after the English patients who were not well enough to look after themselves. The ward contained about thirty beds with British, French, Belgian, and Russian N.C.O.'s and men in them. There were no officers in the hospital.

Here I found I was a N.C.O.; I think the Germans had made me a sergeant-major. It took me six weeks to prove I was an officer. I never found out if they had done it for some reason on purpose, possibly a little revenge on the part of the Intelligence Officer who questioned me so indefatigably at Vitry, or perhaps it was simply a mistake; if so they never made any attempt to discover the truth. I had none of my own clothes then so I could not show them my officer's tunic. I had not seen these since they were first cut off me.

In this hospital I got better rapidly, my wounds started to heal up and I began to "sit up and take nourishment" with a vengeance. One or two of the British were

Digitized by Google

getting parcels from home and we all " mucked in " as they always call it. I ate every bit of German food they gave me, and here the rations were a good deal better than at Douai; also I had my full share of the British parcels. My appetite was enormous, it seemed as if nothing could appease it.

The ward itself was warm, there was a large stove in the centre and we had a fairly good supply of coal and coke, but the only light in the long winter evenings was one small electric lamp in the middle of this large room. The habits of the Russians' were not all that could be desired, and the condition of the sanitary accommodation was horrible in the extreme. I got the full benefit of this when I was able to get out of the ward on crutches. All the nursing in this hospital was done by the patients themselves; those who could walk looked after those who could not.

The Boche N.C.O. in charge of the hospital was a very smart young man—very Prussian! When anything happened that he did not like he used to indulge in the German method of intimidation by noise and manner. This

Digitized by Google

consists of striding quickly up to the culprit with a very threatening appearance and holding the face close up to that of the unfortunate miscreant, then proceeding to shout at the very top of the voice a string of threats and admonitions. This is done sometimes for several minutes without a break—how any human throat can bear the strain passes my comprehension! The effect produced is similar to that of a very fierce dog straining at his chain to get at a tramp. They do this to their own men as well as to prisoners.

There were a good many things this particular N.C.O. did not like, so we had this performance several times a day. It used to alarm the Russians very much, which is not surprising, as they know from bitter experience that it does not always stop at noise and threats in their case. The Russians are usually looked upon and treated as dogs, or rather far worse than we should treat dogs. This little exhibition of Prussian frightfulness never made the slightest impression on the British Tommies, some of them even went so far as to remark calmly at the end of the storm

Digitized by Google

"*Nicht verstehen*," but this would call forth a further and still more violent vocal assault. One of this gentleman's particular fads was that the stove door should never be left open. As we did all our private cooking at this stove, I'm afraid he was disregarded many times a day.

He never actually gave me one of his mad dog exhibitions; this I attribute to the fact that I claimed to be an officer, and though he affected to disbelieve the claim he always had a lurking suspicion at the back of his mind that it might prove to be true. I was wakened up one afternoon from a little nap by a Boche who ordered me to come outside and help unload a waggon of coal, but on cries from all round the ward of "*Ein Offizier, ein Offizier*," he grumblingly withdrew.

The N.C.O. in charge also strongly objected to our smoking or whistling. One forgetful Australian was very fond of whistling tunes under his breath, but however soft it was our friend would hear it, his eyes would flash, he would spring from his chair and down would come the tornado. If we wanted to smoke we were graciously allowed to hobble out

Digitized by Google

and stand in a dirty passage down which swept an icy wind, and as the only clothes we had on were a very thin cotton shirt and cotton overalls one could scarcely under such circumstances look upon a cigarette as a luxury. Needless to say we constantly smoked in the ward, *sub rosa*. The whole atmosphere was strongly reminiscent of one's schooldays, and as, in my case, these had been over twenty years ago it often struck me as very humorous.

Picture to yourself a Russian giant surreptitiously smoking a cigarette and carefully blowing the smoke up the chimney whilst every now and then he peers cautiously round the stove to see if he is observed by the Boche who is sitting at a little table at the end of the ward. This stove proved very useful in another way. Sometimes a Boche orderly would come in to pick out a suitable man for some work. Any man who from past experience knew that he was likely to be chosen would crouch behind this large round stove, and, as the Boche walked down the ward, he would carefully edge round it, keeping it always between himself and the German.

Digitized by Google

PRISONERS OF WAR AT VERDEN HOSPITAL, 1917

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

There was a sporting chance he might succeed in evading capture, but more often he would be outmanœuvred and hauled off to do the job.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV

WHILST at this hospital I saw many prisoners brought in from the workng camps, usually very ill and emaciated.

The Russians were in a deplorable condition of rags and filth, many of them, poor wretches, looked more like the comic tramps that one sees on the music-hall stage than soldiers.

Two Englishmen were brought in from small camps behind the lines; they had only been captured a little over a month and were both unwounded. They were fearfully thin and one was so weak he could not get out of bed. I asked what was the matter with them, they answered laconically "Starvation." One of them soon improved with the rest and better food, including a share of the English parcels, but the other seemed no better when

Digitized by Google

I left, and I am very much afraid he had gone too far.

One of the British had a bad attack of pleurisy in the hospital and, although the doctor examined him and must have known what was the matter with him, nothing whatever was done in the way of special food or care of any sort. In fact, when we managed to get hold of an extra blanket for him to draw over his bed in the early mornings when the fire had gone out, it was taken away by the German N.C.O. directly he noticed it. The nurse, whose nursing mainly consisted in putting down more or less imaginary temperatures on our charts each day, was told that this man had pleurisy—the fact was patent to anyone—and that he could not take any food except milk. She merely smiled and nodded and did absolutely nothing. He was doled out his ration of black bread and cabbage or mangel-wurzel soup as usual.

At last, nearly a fortnight later, when he was recovering, they gave him some slightly better food, including about half a pint of milk a day. I am quite sure that if we had not clubbed together, as far as food was con-

Digitized by Google

cerned, and looked after him as well as we could he would have died—he was undoubtedly very near it.

One day a rather unpleasant Boche who handed out our bread rations informed us, with a very rueful countenance, that he was ordered to the Western front. One of the British, speaking in the universal "prisoner's German," said he wished he was going to.

"What?" said the Boche, very astonished. "You mean to say you would sooner go to the Western front than stay here!"

"Rather," answered the Englishman. "I'd perhaps get a chance of having a shot at you."

"Oh," he said, "you wouldn't shoot me, surely?"

"Wouldn't I?" was the reply. "You give me a rifle and see."

During my stay here the old local schoolmaster used to visit us about once a week; he collected the letters and acted as censor, I believe. As he spoke very good English, I explained my position to him fully, and he promised to do his best to get the matter put right as to my being an officer.

His visits were rather amusing. I always

Digitized by Google

managed to convince him of the truth of my statements, and he would go away full of what he would do on my behalf with the German commandant. Then I would wait about a week and back he would come with every sign of having been persuaded by the commandant that my story was a pack of lies. I would then start all over again to convince him, and so it went on.

He said to me once, "If you have a commission, where is it?" evidently under the impression that anyone who said he was an officer and had not got his commission pasted on his chest must be a fraud. Nothing short of actual attachment to my skin would have ensured its still being in my possession, and even so it would probably have been much damaged. However, this professor was rather kind: he lent me several English books —Shakespeare, Scott, and Washington Irving.

I wrote several times to my wife explaining that I was being classed as an N.C.O. and she got the matter put right through the War Office at home. At any rate, after I had been at Verden about six weeks they suddenly paid me the balance of the sixty marks due

Digitized by Google

to me on January 1st and, a few days later, that due February 1st. I knew in that way that they recognized again that I was an officer, though they would never admit the mistake.

It was in this hospital that I first got letters from home—fourteen weeks after I had been captured. A great day indeed! They came at 9 o'clock in the evening, just as the lights were put out. They were brought to me by the nurse, I told her they were the first I had had, so she allowed me to have the light on for ten minutes. I shall never forget those ten minutes.

A Dutch Catholic priest used to visit the hospital occasionally to say Mass in the adjoining barrack, but unfortunately the Prussian N.C.O. was as violently anti-Catholic as he was anti-British, and he took apparently great pleasure in informing the Catholic prisoners of the priest's visit *after* the Mass was over. The Dutch priest got into the ward once and I managed to tell him that this accounted for the non-appearance of the prisoners at Mass, so he gave me the day and time of his next visit and in that way we

Digitized by Google

managed to circumvent the Boche's little prejudices. He tried his best to overhear my conversation with the priest, but I did not mind if he did as long as I got the information as to the date and time of the next Mass.

I was moved from this hospital on February 13th, 1917, and left my Tommy friends with great regret. I had been hoping all along that my parcels might begin to arrive before I left there, so that I might in some small way repay them for their great generosity and kindness to me; but these did not start to arrive for another week, when, as I shall explain in another chapter, they were needed even more urgently.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V

I NOW undertook my first journey as a "walking case." The authorities gave me a stout stick with a rubber end and fitted me out in an extraordinary assortment of clothes. I must have looked a curious object. I had an Australian tunic, cavalry breeches—many sizes too large for me—a blue French cap and Australian boots; the latter had been accidentally left in the train by my friend the major when he was taken out at Hanover. It was very lucky for me, as otherwise the Germans would have supplied me with wooden clogs, which I should not have appreciated, as I was still very lame. I had a small haversack which had been given me by the French Red Cross on leaving the hospital at Douai. In this I carried all my worldly belongings, including my ration of bread for the journey.

Digitized by Google

I was fairly exhausted when I and the Landsturm sergeant, who was my guard, arrived at the station, because this was the first time I had walked at all. We travelled third-class and, as I sat uncomfortably on the hard wooden seats, I wondered what rank I should find myself at the end of the journey. I understood that I was being taken to Karlsruhe.

For the whole of the journey, which took fifteen hours, the carriage was quite full of a constantly changing succession of German soldiers on leave. They were all very kind to me, offering me cigarettes and insisting on getting me free coffee at those stations where it was being distributed to the troops. Once a soldier dressed in what was to me a strange uniform, passed down the corridor; there were muttered oaths and jeers and every token of dislike on the part of the German soldiers as he passed. I asked them who he was and with gestures of disgust they answered "Austrian." One would have thought from their manner they were speaking of their bitterest enemy instead of their Ally.

We had to change at a large station towards

Digitized by Google

the end of the journey, and my sergeant took me into the spacious restaurant on the platform, where we had imitation coffee. I asked the waiter what he had in the way of food—I could have done with a jolly good meal—he answered " Sardines," so I ordered sardines on toast.

" No toast," he informed me.

" Well, bread, then," I said.

Again he repeated :

" No bread, this is sardine day—coffee and one sardine."

That and beer or wine was absolutely all they were allowed to sell that day in this large restaurant.

We reached Karlsruhe at two o'clock in the morning, and I was very glad to leave the wooden seat in the train, which had been crowded all the way ; part of the time, in addition to the full complement of passengers, there were two of the German Red Cross hounds in my compartment, which, to add to the general discomfort, fought lustily round our legs.

The first thing I did when I got outside the station was to fall flat on my face in the gutter

Digitized by Google

—my rubber-tipped stick had slipped on the ice and snow. I was helped up by the sergeant and the station-master, and we proceeded down the main road till we reached a sort of small hotel or similar building with sentries marching up and down in front of it. There I was handed over by my guard, signed for, and "consignment note" examined, etc., and then I was put into a small very clean room by myself; this room had frosted glass windows screwed up and an armed sentry outside the locked door. I felt quite important, but was very quickly asleep on the bed.

In the morning I was given a cup of coffee for breakfast, and at midday a plate of soup, potatoes and bread, which was brought in by a Russian prisoner; when I spoke to him he put his finger to his lips and made signs that he was not allowed to answer. It all seemed very mysterious.

Later in the day a German N.C.O. entered with the usual papers to be filled up—the oft-repeated list of questions as to your mother's maiden name and the colour of your grandfather's eyes, etc. I asked him why I

Digitized by Google

was being kept in solitary confinement and when I was to join the other prisoners. He said in a few days I should be taken to the camp. I asked "Why not now?" He replied that I must wait there for my clothes to be disinfected. As I was wearing the only clothes I had and had spent the last four months in their hospitals, the excuse did not seem to be a very good one.

On the third day of my stay there when I was beginning to get rather "fed up" with my own society, the N.C.O. rushed in in a great hurry and ordered me to take a bath in the bathroom on the other side of the passage. It seemed from his manner that I had about five minutes to catch a train, and it did not appear to be the most suitable moment one could choose for taking a bath. However, I obeyed, but was careful to take all my clothes with me into the bathroom, much against the N.C.O.'s wishes, which he expressed very volubly. But I had been four months in Germany by that time and had learnt that there were times when it was much more convenient not to understand any instructions that might be given, even at the

Digitized by Google

cost of appearing curiously lacking in intelligence.

After the bath I was rushed downstairs to be questioned by a *Feldwebel-Leutnant.* All the old business over again, except that he had evidently had very little practice at the game. I felt quite sorry for him at times, and to try and fill up the long and painful pauses in the conversation I discussed the relative values of the German and English Electric tramway systems. But this well-meant attempt at polite conversation on my part did not seem to please him somehow!

After this ludicrous interview, I was marshalled down a long corridor with about half a dozen other British officers. These officers had all been newly captured and had been kept at the hotel for two or three days, but none of them had been confined in a room by themselves.

My own opinion of this hotel at Karlsruhe is that newly-taken prisoners are kept there for a few days, two or three together in a room, with absolutely nothing to do, and I believe there are listening holes in the walls through which the Germans hope to be able

Digitized by Google

to pick up useful scraps of information from the conversation of the officers among themselves. I rather incline to this belief because this is the only place where there is any arrangement of the sort, and Karlsruhe is the camp where new prisoners are taken first.

We were then marched down the road to the camp. Our arrival at our destination, which is the centre of the town and is a collection of hutments surrounded by wooden walls and barbed wire, gave me my first view of a *Kriegsgefangenenlager*. There I began the ordinary life of an Officer Prisoner of War in Germany.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI

THERE were eight of us in our hut and we clubbed all our available resources. The camp had only been opened a week or two before, and I had, I believe, been longer in captivity than any of the others; at any rate, none of us were getting parcels from home yet and the food question was very acute until mine started to arrive, and even then—" What is one among so many? "

Some of the French officers were getting chocolate and biscuits from home and we sometimes had a few of the latter. One very kind Belgian officer took pity on us and used to invite us all in turn to his room and share all the food he got with us. He had been a prisoner since August, 1914, and if he had spent all the time in being as kind to others as he was to us it had certainly not been time

Digitized by Google

wasted as far as he was concerned. Still in spite of all this generosity we were a very hungry hutful.

The weather was still very cold and the two thin blankets on the beds were not enough, but we had a fairly good supply of coal if only the stove had been bigger. After a rather chilly night a glass of hot water and a Boche cigarette do not constitute a really hearty breakfast.

The meals were at midday and 6 p.m. and there was never enough food. It consisted mostly of carrots and mangel-wurzels, with now and then a very few half bad potatoes or two raw sardines or tiny herrings, and once a week a minute slice of meat. These herrings had been pickled, and we used to try to cook them, but they always fell to pieces at once and degenerated into soup. We tried saving this scanty fare during the day and putting it all together and making the best meal we could of it at 9 o'clock in the evening. In this way we found we could sleep better ; but the days were rather trying, as we could think and talk of nothing else but food.

I was " mess president " of our little mess

Digitized by Google

of eight, and it was an anxious time in the evening when I started to cook the day's savings: any accident would indeed have been a tragedy. If I had ever spoiled the food I don't think I should have dared to face the hungry and reproachful eyes of my trusting comrades. Also it is not an easy feat to divide five sardines quite equally among eight men. These sardines we managed to buy occasionally in the canteen—three marks fifty for a tin of five, or six, if you were lucky, *without oil!*

A horrible anxiety began to take possession of us about this time: I was getting letters regularly now all speaking of the despatch of parcels—but none of these had arrived. Were they lost? Horrible thought!

I made a list of the non-arrivals as best I could from my letters and took it to the camp officer at the Kommandantur. He said he would make enquiries; if they had failed to find me they would have been sent to Berlin. Could I give him the names of the shops from which they had been despatched—the labels might help to trace them. I gave this information as best I could, telling him that

Digitized by Google

most of them had been sent from the Army and Navy Stores.

"Oh, really," he said, "that's my firm, or, I suppose, I ought to say, it used to be my firm—I worked there before the war."

He was an *Oberleutnant* in the German Army.

I may say that I got more than half of these lost parcels eventually, and the very first to arrive reached me on my birthday. We carefully divided it out and the contents lasted us about three days with great care.

We now had a little tea and this was a great treat. Now and then we had been able to buy small quantities of so-called tea in the canteen, but it was simply leaves and twigs pulled off any tree that was handy apparently; it was not dried at all and when brewed tasted like an unpleasant medicine. Personally I preferred hot water.

The gradual arrival of these parcels helped matters considerably and we were also getting a little bread now from Switzerland and Denmark, though most of mine, which should have been reaching me regularly, never arrived. Much later, when they were

Digitized by Google

OFFICER PRISONERS AT KARLSRUHE, 1917

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

not so badly needed, my parcels came fairly regularly.

As the weeks went on some of the other officers' supplies from home became due, and we were all setting our hopes very much on a certain man who had a brother in Switzerland: surely, we thought, his parcels were bound to reach him quickly. We carefully calculated the days and weeks. This officer was a very studious man—a journalist and writer before the war—and he often spoke of how he hoped soon to get a supply of books from his brother or from home; this talk left us rather cold as, although we all wanted books, the only really important thing in life at that time was food. At last the day arrived when the Boche who had charge of the parcel room put his head into our hut and said there was a parcel for this particular officer.

We poured blessings on his head as he joyfully went off to fetch it. He took with him three plates and a jam jar to hold our immediate wants for the day—the Germans opened all tins at this camp and one had to carry the contents away on plates, etc. We waited breathlessly and planned the

Digitized by Google

meals. Some of them even went so far as recklessly to eat the last little bit of bread they had saved up for the evening meal. It was a moment of tense expectation such as comes but seldom in a lifetime. The larder was very low—in other words it was quite empty.

At last we saw him emerge from the parcel room.

But what was this ?

The empty plates were still tucked under his arm, the empty and melancholy jam jar hung disconsolately head downwards and in his hands were four BOOKS !

What was more, he had the effrontery to appear interested in them—he had actually opened one of them and was dipping into its contents as he walked along.

He entered the hut with rather a shame-faced smile. There was a deathly silence.

I crept out and made my way to the wine canteen, where I felt fairly sure of finding a rather hot-tempered member of our mess. I wished to break the awful news to him, I hoped to soften the blow and assuage his more or less righteous indignation before the in-

Digitized by Google

evitable meeting took place. I tried to pour oil on the troubled waters by appealing to his better nature, and more especially his patience : other parcels were bound to follow. I reminded him of the love he bore me—and my parcels.

It was useless.

One stony stare of horrified incredulity, then with a roar like a lioness bereaved of her whelps he made a rush for our hut. I draw a veil over the scene that followed. To be quite truthful, there wasn't one. His bark was a good deal worse than his bite, but I think the arrival of those books cast a decided gloom over our little gathering that night.

I may say, however, that books were needed badly in the camp then and the German Catholic priest, who visited the camp each week to say Mass, did all he could to get us some and managed to get a lot of old English periodicals from somewhere, which he gave us, and also arranged for us to buy the Tauchnitz editions of English books through the canteen. In this way we started a library which later on, I understand, became a very good one indeed at this camp, and I heard

Digitized by Google

afterwards that the Commandant fitted up a little room with shelves at his own expense.

There were a great many Merchant Service officers here at this time, most of whom had been taken prisoner by the *Möwe*. With their energetic help we organized weekly concerts on Saturday evenings, and I got up one or two little sketches which were written by our friend who received the ever-to-be-remembered parcel of books.

In this way and by playing various games those who were sufficiently energetic managed to pass the time.

Occasionally we would hear on the road outside the wall the sound of a terrible German brass band playing martial airs. The first time this happened many of us climbed up the barbed wire which surrounded the " neutral zone " and in this way were able to look over the wooden palings. We saw about twenty miserable looking recruits being marched to the station led by this shocking band, the members of which were dressed in the old dark blue uniform with red facings. They looked a sorry lot and we derisively cheered them and waved our caps. The

Digitized by Google

Boche, with whom a sense of humour is not a strong point, seemed very puzzled and stared up at us with wondering eyes. But our action caused the greatest excitement in the Kommandantur; one of the *Unteroffiziere*—N.C.O.'s—rushed out and waving his arms shouted beseechingly to us:

"Shentlemen, shentlemen, I imblore you, eet ees *verboten*."

That evening a notice appeared on the board gravely stating the awful penalties we incurred by climbing on the wire of the neutral zone.

There were a few American citizens among the merchantmen captured by the *Möwe*, and these were lucky enough to get repatriated just before the United States declared war. I remember one of these, who had signed on as a doctor, was of a very melancholy disposition. He used to sit in our room sometimes and indulge in very long dismal accounts of the hardships that he had undergone during his capture. He spoke in a very slow impressive American drawl. His audience, most of whom had spent many months in the trenches and in some cases had been badly wounded,

Digitized by Google

could not help being amused at his oft-repeated: "Gee, taalk about sufferin'!"

After I had been at Karlsruhe about nine weeks I was suddenly moved off with about forty or fifty others to Heidelberg. Fortunately my uniform had arrived from home before I had to make another public appearance in the streets.

We were marched down to the station with Landsturm guards on each side of us. The townspeople took very little notice of prisoners then and there was never anything in the nature of a hostile demonstration: all this ended in 1914, I believe. Once, I remember, in a certain town an old lady appeared at a high balcony and waved and even blew a kiss to us. Whether she was pro-British or short-sighted I can't say.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII

WE only stayed at Heidelberg ten days and were then moved off to Crefeld.

During the night, on the journey, whilst the guards in the railway carriage snored peacefully—there were two guards and four prisoners in each carriage—a friend of mine escaped from the train through the window. He was an officer in the R.F.C. who had only been captured about six weeks ; he was wearing his ordinary uniform and flying boots.

Later he gave me a full account of his experiences which, I think, were unique.

When we reached Cologne his absence was discovered, and we were all put in a small room under the station stairs, where we were kept for some hours. Most of our prisoners, I think, know this little room, personally I was put in it twice on different occasions. If there were many in it at a time it was very

Digitized by Google

uncomfortable as there was absolutely no ventilation, and nothing on which to sit down except the stone floor.

After keeping us there for a few hours they took us on to Crefeld under a double guard. I expect the two sentries who went to sleep in the train were sent to the Western Front, that being the usual punishment for lapses of duty.

Well, this friend of mine, whom I will call M, spoke German fairly well and French quite perfectly.

He walked that night in the direction of the Dutch frontier, his greatest difficulty being the extraordinary number of small rivers and streams which all seemed to be flowing at right angles to his direction. He jumped the smaller ones and in one case mistook the shadow of the further bank for the bank itself and landed up to his knees in black mud. In getting out of this he left his flying boots behind him and it took him half an hour to extricate them from the mud.

He travelled for two nights and lay hid during the day. The first morning he found some turnips in a field and expected to find

Digitized by Google

more as he went along, but, unfortunately, these were the last he saw and he had nothing whatever to eat for two days and nights.

By the end of the second day his very unsuitable boots were causing him a lot of inconvenience and it was impossible for him to walk any further, so he waited on the side of the railway and jumped on the back buffer of a goods train which was going in the desired direction. The guard, looking out of the last van, saw his legs sticking out and asked him what he was doing. He said he'd lost his railway pass and was very tired, so the guard invited him to climb into the van and made him comfortable in the corner.

In answer to his questions M gave him the first story that came into his head, saying he was a Belgian workman who had been taken by the Germans on their entry into Belgium in August, 1914. He had been sent to Düsseldorf and had been working there during the whole of the war. He had heard that his old mother, who was still living in the occupied territory in Belgium, was very ill, and as he had not been allowed to go home for the last fifteen months he had run away to visit her.

Digitized by Google

The railway guard was very sympathetic and said he would put him down in Liége as the train was going there. M decided to slip off the van just before they reached the Belgian frontier, walk the short distance to the Dutch frontier and so get across if possible.

However, as bad luck would have it, the train stopped in a brilliantly lighted goods yard and an inspector put his head into the van and saw him. After some questions the inspector said he could not be allowed to travel without a pass, and he had him placed under arrest and taken to the police station.

Next morning he was had up in court and tried by the magistrate on a charge of travelling on the railway without a pass. His unpremeditated story had now to be enlarged upon. He had to give his mother's name and address in Belgium, and to state that he was working as a chemical mixer in a perfectly imaginary rubber factory in Düsseldorf—a town he had never been to in his life. The address of his firm he gave as Station Street feeling pretty certain there was bound to be a street of that name in

Digitized by Google

every German town. He also drew a sad picture of the very low wages he was paid in comparison with the much higher remuneration he used to receive in Belgium for the same work.

The magistrate said :

" What are those clothes you are wearing ? "

He replied that he thought they were a British soldier's uniform.

" Well, how did you get them ? " was the next question.

Hurried thought on the part of M ; then throwing himself into it he began the following explanation. His own clothes had worn out after he had been at the factory about a year, so he and a lot of other workmen were taken to a large room at the top of the building which was full of all sorts of second-hand clothes—most of them uniforms—where he had picked these out as he thought they looked rather nice !

The magistrate agreed that they did look nice but that they didn't fit him very well did they ? M thought he would report this remark to his tailor when he got back to England.

Digitized by Google

The next question was :

" What are the wings on the left breast ? "

He believed that was something to do with work on the railway but he did not know for certain—there is a somewhat similar sign of outspread wings on the railway carriages in Germany.

All this time M was hoping that the magistrate would simply order his return under arrest to the imaginary Düsseldorf factory, when he hoped to be able to escape on the way as the guard supplied under these circumstances would probably not be very difficult to elude.

However, to his great disappointment the magistrate said, although he felt very sorry for him, he could not do less than sentence him to fourteen days' imprisonment for travelling without a pass.

M knew then that it was all up, as they were bound to make enquiries and would be sure to find out that all his statements were moonshine. He also thought there was no sense in doing fourteen days in a civilian prison and then having to do his five months in the military cells for escaping—the sen-

Digitized by Google

tence on an officer for escaping was five months at that time—so he thanked the magistrate and told him there was not a word of truth in the story he had told him and that really he was a British officer trying to escape!

Sensation in Court.

They nearly fell on his neck they were so delighted at having captured an escaping officer prisoner. They plied him with sandwiches and coffee and were buzzing all round him. They then put him under a strong armed guard and took him to the Kommandantur of the prisoners' camp at Crefeld.

There he was taken before the commandant, who was also given the typed copies of the shorthand notes of the evidence taken at the police court proceedings.

The commandant leant back in his chair and commenced to peruse the notes. A smile flickered on his face which gradually broadened as he continued to read until it ended in a fit of uncontrollable laughter, and mopping his face he said:

"What a lot of fools they must be not to have known that uniform. When you started

Digitized by Google

on this story you meant to make a good job of it, didn't you? I've got to sentence you to five months in the cells, but as they are all full now there's a waiting list of about twenty, you can go back to your friends for the present."

So back he came and then he told me the whole of this story.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII

WE were, comparatively speaking, in the lap of luxury at Crefeld. There were eight or nine hundred British officers there, a great many of whom had been in that one camp for two and a half years, and they all had large stores of food from home; our parcels also were arriving now and things were decidedly better.

The prisoners had made several fives courts, a polo practice pit, and were just commencing to turn the large barrack square into twenty tennis-courts.

We bought about thirty cartloads of sand for this purpose, and obtained wire-netting to surround each court, also nets, poles, racquets, balls, etc., from home, and each of the three large five-story barrack buildings in which we lived formed tennis clubs and everything was well organized.

Digitized by Google

Before being turned into tennis-courts the ground had been used during the winter for football and baseball, and there was a splendid football match every Sunday afternoon between the officers and orderlies. As there were many first-class players in both teams, the play was fast and furious, though the ground being gravel scraped hands and knees, etc., were of constant occurrence.

There was also a well-appointed little theatre with a well-raked auditorium. Just as I arrived Bernard Shaw's "You Never Can Tell" was being given for eight nights by a company consisting entirely of officers, including, of course, all the women's parts. The scenery had been painted entirely by artist officers, the furniture and "props" made by others, as also were the "ladies'" dresses and hats. The men's clothes were hired or made in the town by permission of the commandant.

The lighting of the stage, including rippling moonlight on the sea, was all excellently done, in fact the whole play was staged perfectly in every detail.

During the day rehearsals were going on

Digitized by Google

of a musical *revue* written by one of the prisoners, which was to be produced about a week after the run of "You Never Can Tell," and a further company was just beginning rehearsals of "Ready Money" to follow that.

In this way the theatre was kept almost constantly open. I was preparing to produce "The Silver Box" and "The Speckled Band" when, unfortunately, the camp was broken up as I will describe later.

One sees from the plays I have mentioned that we went in for variety, and catered for all tastes. I understand that one of the greatest successes ever produced was "Baby Mine," but I believe this was done at Guttes-low by the officers who afterwards came on to Crefeld.

In the same building as the theatre was the chapel, in which were held the Church of England services at 11 o'clock on Sundays, conducted by an officer-chaplain prisoner of war; and at 10 o'clock a German priest came to say Mass for the Catholics. There had been a great many French officers at Crefeld, but these had all been sent to Heidel-

Digitized by Google

berg in exchange for us ; however, there were one or two left behind for some reason, and on my first Sunday there Mass was said by the German priest, who was served by one French and one English officer—a rather striking sight I thought.

On my second night at Crefeld I was invited to dinner by an officer of my regiment and was very much struck by the wonderful way in which the rooms of these old prisoners had been decorated and made more home-like. Each room was occupied by about ten officers ; in some cases they had moved their beds into the passages and slept there, turning their room into a well-appointed sitting-room. They had fitted a cooking stove in one corner and screened it off with a cardboard and wooden frame screen, making a little kitchen with shelves, etc., in this corner, the reverse side of the screen being covered with wall-paper of the same pattern as that which they had put up on the walls of the room. There were carpets on the floor and easy chairs and small tables, with many pictures painted by themselves or their friends.

In other cases the beds had been " double-

Digitized by Google

decked" with curtains hung in front of them during the day, and many different ideas of decoration and furnishing had been carefully thought out and executed. The results were really wonderful when one considers that originally the rooms were bare barracks, the furniture consisting of ten iron plank bedsteads, ten wooden stools and five tall cupboards to hold the prisoners' belongings.

My experience in Germany convinces me that, however unpromising the material, the British always know how to make the best of it and also how to make themselves as comfortable as possible under the most difficult circumstances.

The worst part of this camp was that there were three rather lengthy roll-calls, or "*Appells*" as they were always called in Germany, each day; but this was not a very serious objection to what otherwise we had made into a very good camp.

If there are any possibilities at all in a camp, and if the prisoners are left there long enough, they always manage to make themselves fairly comfortable provided they are not unduly interfered with by the Boche; but if

Digitized by Google

the latter made themselves objectionable our energies were directed towards their taming. There are many little ways in which officer prisoners can make their sentiments felt. Things can easily be made very awkward indeed for the powers that be should these be inclined to make themselves a nuisance. Wise commandants soon learn this and the tone of all the officials and guards at a camp is naturally taken from their chief.

At Crefeld we were very fortunate, they never bothered us at all as long as things went smoothly. When arriving at a new camp the first question is always "What are the Boche like here?" If the answer is "Eat out of your hand" all is well.

These "*Appells*" sometimes provided a little humour. I remember one on a hot summer afternoon particularly. All the prisoners stood five deep in a large hollow square facing inwards, all must be in their places ten minutes after the warning has been given by a very unmusical call on a bugle.

At one side stands the senior British officer —in this case a General—and with him the other senior officers. Into the centre then

Digitized by Google

come the German camp officers and the N.C.O.'s who do the counting. If anyone was late on these "*Appells*" he had to march across the square, first apologize to the General and then report to the Germans. If, when the counting was done, the number was wrong it had to be gone over again, and if still wrong we had organized a system of runners—two officers for each of the barrack buildings to search quickly all the rooms in case someone was found asleep on his bed—this was the quickest way to avoid long delays when anyone failed to turn up. On this particular afternoon we had been counted twice and still there was one man short; the runners had been out to all the buildings and drawn a blank. Again we were counted with the same result! The camp officer was getting anxious and irritable, and we were all getting very tired of standing there, the *Appell* had lasted by this time for more than half an hour. The bugler was ordered to parade round the camp and blow his ear-splitting bugle call again, but still nothing happened. Suddenly some one noticed a deck-chair with its back to us just by the corner of a building.

Digitized by Google

Strolling over to it he discovered a wretched subaltern peacefully sleeping through all the hubbub.

Just as we had got twenty tennis-courts all finished, the Boche got "wind up" badly and decided to break up the camp and send us in three or four different parties to various camps. They told us afterwards that they had learnt that we were going to make an organized attempt to escape *en masse* and the camp was too dangerously near the Dutch frontier.

They brought two machine-guns and placed them in suitable positions outside to guard the gate, with teams standing ready with them day and night. They also drafted in a full battalion of extra guards. When we asked the reason for all this show of force, they said they feared an attack on the camp by the townspeople, who had become very restive on seeing the cartloads of food parcels from England coming in each day. We pointed out that the machine guns were trained on us and not in the opposite direction! We knew that something was in the wind, but I may say that their idea of an organized plot to escape was a figment

Digitized by Google

of their imagination, it had, so far as I know, no foundation in fact.

The last two days at Crefeld were very busy ones. Every one was packing his personal belongings and there was a great deal of work connected with getting the stores of tins, cooking stoves, furniture, games and library, etc., packed up. A great many very large two-horse lorries took most of the luggage off to the station the day before. Everything was labelled Camp 1, 2 or 3 as the case might be—our destinations were a secret.

On the last evening's *Appell* three officers were found to be missing and the Germans set to work to try to discover who they were. This entailed calling a roll of about nine hundred names, and each man as his name was called had to pass through a barrier to another part of the yard which was surrounded by guards. As can readily be imagined, this took many hours, and it was well after midnight before it was all over, and even then they had not discovered who the absentees were. When it grew dark and every one was getting very tired of hanging about, various bonfires of furniture that could

Digitized by Google

not be taken away were started in different parts of the yard, and a favourite amusement consisted in setting fire to a broom head and, when it was well alight, swinging it round the head and throwing it up in the air like a blazing comet.

In the darkness also many of the officers after they had passed the barrier got back through the guards into the crowd that had still to answer to their names, making it perfectly impossible for the Germans to discover who the missing men were. Altogether it was a wild night, and as most of us had to be on parade at four a.m. to go to the station there was very little sleep in the camp for anyone. In fact we were not allowed into our rooms until the roll-call was finished, which was at 1.45 a.m. if I remember right.

Next morning, just after daybreak, we marched out surrounded by a very strong guard. This procession to the railway siding, where we entrained, was absolutely the most comical sight I have ever seen.

Picture to yourself a very slow moving column of several hundred British officers of all ranks carrying all their most precious

Digitized by Google

possessions that they dare not entrust to the Germans to be sent on. Each man carried one or two bags, many had bulging haversacks on their backs, some of the orderlies carried on their heads or in their arms hutches full of tame rabbits; there were many canaries in cages, also two or three dogs.

Several of the officers were hung all round with frying-pans, kettles and kitchen utensils of all kinds. They looked rather like cheap Jacks at a fair. I noticed one officer who had, slung on a cord round his neck, a large zinc hip bath full of soft cushions and tins of food held out level in front of him like one of those figures holding a card-tray one sees in the halls of some houses. Many of the prisoners had over-estimated their carrying capacity, and a great many precious possessions were left on the roadside.

Add to this scene the dim misty morning; constant calls for the halt of the whole procession whilst some one near the front paused to readjust his burdens, bursts of laughter at various mishaps, and the whole solemnly guarded by hundreds of Landsturm men with rifles.

Digitized by Google

At last we were all safely packed in the train with our multifarious belongings, and we started on what turned out to be a twenty-four hour journey. The Germans, by the way, never made the slightest attempt to feed us on these journeys. We always took our food with us from our parcels, without that we should have had nothing at all. As it was, we could not even get hot water to make tea; nothing whatever is provided.

Our guards were in only a little better case than ourselves. Their rations very often consisted of a few slices of dry bread, and it is not in human nature—at least British human nature—to see their hungry eyes watching us eating the excellent things from home without offering them a share. We always gave them something and their gratitude was very sincere. I saw one officer give the guard in his carriage some white bread with generous slices of ham. He nearly burst into tears: it was the first ham he had tasted, he said, for two and a half years. When one remembers how fond the Germans are of *Schweinefleisch* one can perhaps faintly guess at his feelings.

Digitized by Google

At one stop on the journey the guard was called out of a particular carriage for some purpose, and the officer in charge saw him finishing a piece of cake which had been given him by one of the prisoners. He blazed with fury and gave him a five minutes' exhibition of the mad dog vocal attack. He reminded him in very grandiloquent language that he was disgracing the honour of the Fatherland, and that no British soldier would dream of so demeaning himself as to accept food from a German prisoner.

That might be true, but there would not be the same temptation or the same opportunity ! The Landsturm men in my carriage laughed and said their officer was off his head !

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX

AT the end of this journey there was a long march to the camp, though I and some other lame men were taken up on a light railway. The camp, known as Schwarmstedt, was situated in the middle of a marshy moor. The soil was sandy on the surface, but very wet just underneath and had been more or less drained by ditches. It was a desolate-looking place of black wooden huts surrounded by double railings of barbed wire. The huts would scarcely be used in this country by any self-respecting farmer to keep his cattle in.

We stayed here for about four months; fortunately, it was summer, as the buildings were anything but weather-proof. There were two large ponds dug in the middle of the camp full of black stagnant water which smelt very bad. The Germans said these were for use

Digitized by Google

in case of fire, but, in reality, they were the drainage of the camp.

The sanitary arrangements were very bad ; simply a large deep pit with a rough wooden shed built over it. This building, if one can call it a building, was within twelve yards of the sleeping and living accommodation. The pit was more or less emptied periodically by British orderlies and the contents thrown on the ground, as manure, just outside the wire. This work must have been very horrible for the men engaged on it, and the effect on everyone living in the camp was most objectionable. The Kommandantur was a considerable distance away outside the camp.

It is really astonishing that illness did not break out among the prisoners, but I suppose the fact that the pit was always open prevented this, though it added very much to the offensiveness. Schwarmstedt had the unenviable reputation of being the worst camp in Germany and I certainly hope it was. It had originally been used as a men's camp, and was then occupied by Rumanian officers with whom we had changed places.

By permission of the German authorities

Digitized by Google

we had left behind one officer at Crefeld for a few days to look after the despatch of the English parcels, etc., and he saw the arrival of these unfortunate Rumanians. They were all in a state of great misery and exhaustion through long-continued lack of sufficient food. Their condition was deplorable, and in order to help their immediate needs he left fifty cases of food stuffs for them—mainly biscuits. It is to be hoped that this, together with the better conditions of Crefeld, would greatly relieve their sufferings, which must have been dreadful during the previous winter at Schwarmstedt.

Our new Commandant was a tall aristocratic old man with very bright piercing blue eyes. He tried in many ways, I think, to improve the bad conditions of the camp as far as he was able; but the camp was in the 10th Army Corps commanded by the notorious anti-British General von Hänisch, and in any camp in this command things were bad for British prisoners.

However, we were allowed a great many walks on parole in the adjoining woods, and by permission of the Commandant we cut

Digitized by Google

down a few trees and made a dam in a little stream, then by digging out the sides of this stream and banking them up with stakes and brushwood we managed to make a large square swimming pool with a diving-board and spring-board. This was much enjoyed during the hot weather, the only objection to it being the enormous number of mosquitoes and horse-flies. The former invaded the camp in swarms and many officers obtained mosquito nets, through the canteen, to hang over their beds. Unfortunately mosquito-nets are no protection against fleas, and of these there were thousands.

One man carried his mattress out into the open and caught fifty in about ten minutes. I saw a small bowl of water put on the floor of the dressing-room, which adjoined the bathroom, and within five minutes seven fleas had jumped in of their own accord and committed suicide.

The principal amusement at this camp was escaping. Five officers got away the first week, and altogether during the four months thirty-six got out and stayed out for times varying from one to fourteen days before

Digitized by Google

being recaptured. Only two managed to get over the Dutch frontier and so home. Two poor fellows were shot whilst escaping, one of them was killed on the spot. As a rule the Germans do not shoot unless obliged to do so, but there have been a few very bad exceptions to this. The above tragedy threw rather a gloom over the camp for some time; but in most of these escapes there was a great element of humour.

I must say that I have never laughed so much in my life as I have done over some of these escapes and the subsequent puzzled attempts of the Germans to solve the mystery. After one of these escapes the German officer said to some of us with whom he was talking: "How did those officers manage to escape yesterday? You cannot get out of this camp—there is no hole cut in the wire; you are not birds—you cannot fly." One prisoner, who during his three years of captivity had managed to get away seven times, told me that one could always rely with absolute confidence on the almost unbelievable stupidity of the Boche. The most difficult part of the job was getting over the frontier.

Digitized by Google

There were very strict regulations at this camp that no tins of food were to be allowed inside the camp. We were passed through a barbed wire passage to the parcels room, not more than ten allowed in at once, and all tins had to be opened and the contents examined and put on plates, etc., before being carried into the camp.

One reason for this was to make it impossible for us to have a store of food that would keep to take with us when we escaped. The rule caused a good deal of inconvenience, as during the very hot weather it was a nuisance to have to open all the food wanted for the next twenty-four hours, because there was no suitable place in which to keep it. I may say that the regulations were never obeyed. Unopened tins were always carried away hidden in one's clothes. When one is carrying plates and jars in each hand a tin fits very conveniently inside the tunic under each arm. At all events a great many unopened tins were always stored about the camp.

The Germans used to have periodical searches for these and other forbidden property, such as compasses, etc. But it is not

Digitized by Google

difficult to hide a compass. The Commandant announced to us one day that he had received orders to make a search for tins, he suddenly added in English :

" These tins, damn them, they will be the death of me ! The search will be made to-morrow morning and *I must not find any.* I shall not look under the beds ! "

A priceless example of eye-wash. He knew there were hundreds of tins in the camp. We made very little secret of it.

On another day the camp officer announced on *Appell* that it was *verboten* for us to have rucksacks in our possession as they were " very useful for escaping." So would all officers who had them please take them to the Kommandantur. They always wondered why we laughed at these naive orders. To a German if a thing is *verboten* that is enough. The idea of anyone disobeying an order never seems to occur to them as possible. Needless to say no one meekly handed in their rucksacks, so a few days later a search was made for them. The arrangements for a search were as follows : when we were all standing in the square for roll-call we were requested not to

Digitized by Google

return to our barracks after *Appell*, and a sentry was put on each door to see that we did not disobey. However, we sometimes got through a window, and I have seen this done in full view of a sentry, who made no objection; he had been told to allow no one in at the door and therefore, as he had no orders about entry by the window, in the correct German military way, he did nothing.

The Boche officer, N.C.O.'s and orderlies then enter one of the barracks, and the occupants are called in as each room is reached so that the search may be accomplished in their presence. On this particular morning no burglarious entry through the window was possible. The result was that a full rucksack was discovered all ready packed for escape.

The German officer was very pleased and gloated over it like a cat over a mouse. He then handed it to the sentry in the passage to take care of and proceeded to the next room. There he found another rucksack, but this time an empty one. He asked the officer to whom it belonged if he was going to

Digitized by Google

escape and he answered that he was but that he was not quite ready yet.

" Ah," the little German said, " you should see the rucksack I have just found, it is all prepared, everything complete—food, maps, compass, civilian clothes—everything. I will show you."

He thereupon called loudly for the sentry, who, having put the rucksack on the floor by his feet, rushed up the passage to click his heels and stand at attention before his officer, who told him to go and fetch the rucksack, which the sentry proceeded to do. Needless to say, it had disappeared. It had been hooked by a walking-stick into the next room and conveyed through the window to the first man passing who, hiding it under his coat, transferred it to the barracks on the other side of the square. The wretched sentry had to bear the most awful storm of abuse. The shouts of the infuriated officer reverberated across the camp.

When he had cooled down a little he instituted a most thorough search of the whole barrack, spending many hours and getting very hot and tired over the job. For the

Digitized by Google

reason mentioned above the search proved unsuccessful and he had spent the whole morning over this one barrack hut. One had it in one's heart to feel almost sorry for the poor little man. I wonder if he gave an account of his morning's work to the Commandant.

The Germans are extraordinary people: if they have received orders to search for tins they will take no notice of compasses, for instance, and vice versa. One day they were searching for compasses and maps and the German officer lifted the lid of a large wooden case that I, as mess president, had in my room absolutely full of unopened tins. As soon as he saw the contents he said "Ah, tins!" and slammed the lid down again and passed on. They are great sticklers for carrying out their orders *to the letter*.

The two officers whom I have mentioned as getting over the frontier into Holland quickly put the Dutch Embassy on the track of this camp, and we had a visit from them very shortly afterwards. They took full notes of all they saw and of the complaints of any officer who liked to speak to them. They

Digitized by Google

requested the Germans, among other things, to build proper sanitary accommodation. This they did, but they took so long over it that it was not finished sufficiently for use by the time we all left the camp.

Other recommendations made were agreed to by the Germans, but there was no noticeable difference afterwards in the conditions complained of. They certainly gave us a few cooking stoves with a wooden roof over them on which to cook our private food, but until these stoves were fitted up—which took many weeks—we only had one stove for four hundred officers to cook all their food on.

The food supplied to us in this camp was practically uneatable, as it was all boiled up together into a sticky mess which smelt horrible and looked more like pig's-swill than human food.

We asked for the potatoes out of this concoction to be issued to us raw, so that they should not be wasted and each man be able to cook his share properly. After many weeks we succeeded in getting this done, and these potatoes were all we got in return for the 47 marks a month that we paid for food.

Digitized by Google

In addition to this 47 marks we had to pay 10 pfennigs for a small kettle of hot water—never boiling—5 pfennigs for a glass of filtered water: the only free water was from two pumps in the camp; it was much discoloured and smelt and tasted very bad indeed. Practically none of the boiled mess was eaten by the prisoners, and the Commandant's pigs fattened on it although we had to pay for it. It may have been a natural reluctance on the part of the Commandant to do his pigs out of their potatoes which caused the delay in issuing them separately to us for such a long time.

Before our stoves were fixed we obtained permission to build ovens made from biscuit tins, with a Bath-Oliver tin for a chimney, on the sandbank round the previously mentioned black and stagnant ponds. With these home-made fireplaces we did our best to cook our food, using brushwood out of the woods for fuel, which we carried in bundles on our backs when returning from our walks. The permission granted for this alfresco cooking was somewhat comically worded. Their interpreter was ill, I think he was really so "fed

Digitized by Google

up " with the camp he was trying to get away ; in his absence a certain British officer in the Lancers was asked by the Boche officer to translate for him. This he did in the following terms: " The Commandant gives his gracious permission to the Herrs for them to do their cooking on the battlements surrounding the ornamental waters."

On another occasion he translated a complaint of the number of plates that had been broken since our arrival as nearly as I can remember in the following words: " The Commandant draws the Herrs' attention to the undue and much-to-be-regretted breakage of crockery. Consider, gentlemen, what a serious thing it would be for the German Empire if they ran out of plates altogether."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X

WHEN we first arrived at Schwarmstedt there were no arrangements for the issuing of the English food parcels, so we approached the Commandant with a view to providing the necessary room, etc.

He said, "You will not get any parcels, they cannot reach you now owing to the U Boat campaign." We told him there were about two thousand parcels waiting at the railway station now for us. He then said that they must have been sent from Holland, and when he was shown the various shop labels on the parcels he decided that the labels must have been printed in Holland as an attempt to deceive.

All the Germans here seemed very doubtful as to the continued arrival of parcels and treated it as a fairy tale, until they were forced to realize that their fancied success

Digitized by Google

with their U Boats must have been greatly exaggerated. I remember the British orderly working in the parcel room, when this had been allotted to us, telling the Boche N.C.O. that he wanted accommodation for from five to ten thousand parcels a month and the incredulous amazement on the part of the Boche.

There was no suitable room here for theatrical entertainments, but we had a few concerts : the first one was got up by the orderlies. We also had lectures on any wet afternoon, these had also been an institution at Crefeld. The nature of the small available ground made it impossible to go in for sports, though football of a sort was attempted, and also miniature golf links were made—a sort of glorified clock golf with every imaginable hazard for the putts.

We had one very good sports week, with flat races, obstacle races, long and high jumps and a pillow fight with the opponents sitting astride a stout round horizontal pole, facing each other with their feet well off the ground, it being against the rules to hold on to the poles with the free hand. This was

Digitized by Google

most amusing to watch; the pillows were bags stuffed with straw, and in some cases one good smack on the side of the head was enough to dislodge the recipient and swing him round underneath the pole, where he was well battered by his opponent until he fell limply to the ground. If by leaning quickly backwards he was able to avoid the blow, it sometimes resulted in the striker losing his balance and himself falling off.

All the events were well entered for and the races had all to be run in heats. It was altogether well organized and very successful and, incidentally, three firms of amateur bookmakers did a roaring trade.

I think the best way to describe an officer-prisoner's life in Germany is to give a short description of an average day.

Breakfast was generally about 8.30; this we supplied ourselves, one member of the mess has to get up earlier each morning to prepare it.

Appell at 9.

The mornings were usually spent standing in queues for hot baths, to draw parcels, or food from tins.

Digitized by Google

A party of about forty were allowed out each morning on parole to visit the bathing pool.

Lunch at 12.30, and after that walks and games or classes in languages, book-keeping, etc., for any who cared for them.

The time after tea was spent principally in cooking dinner, which we had immediately after the 7 o'clock *Appell.*

From after dinner till lights-out the time was spent in card-playing, reading, etc.

The barracks were locked at 9, we were finally counted in our huts at 9.30, and lights-out at 10.

Of course many officers who had hobbies spent nearly the whole of their time in special occupations, such as carpentering, book-binding, writing, painting, etc., but for most officers prison life is certainly a very lazy time.

Mentioning *Appell* reminds me of a rather curious characteristic which seemed to me to be almost universal among Germans. I mean their extraordinary lack of self-consciousness. I am sure that most British officers who had to step out into the centre

Digitized by Google

of a hollow square composed of a large number of men, nearly all of whom were quizzing him with more or less unfavourable eyes, would feel a very natural self-consciousness, and I think very few would be able to hide this feeling. Yet never once did I see the slightest sign of such a feeling on the part of a German. I think the reason for this must be a colossal personal and national conceit. It never occurs to them as possible that they could, under any circumstances, appear ridiculous or, by their appearance or manner, cause amusement to the onlookers.

We were all getting rather excited about this time over the chance of internment in Holland. The scheme did not materialize till nearly a year later, but at that time we thought that it was going to start at once. In fact during September the Germans collected eighty of us: sixty according to date, all 1914 prisoners, and twenty invalids. I was among the latter.

They told us to be ready to move off in a few days and that we were going to Holland. We should have to stop at Holzminden for a day or two on the way, they said, to have

Digitized by Google

the necessary papers made out, etc., but the Commandant informed us that he expected we should all be in Holland within a week.

We were very excited, though not perfectly certain about it.

At last the day arrived. We were to leave the camp at 5 a.m., so the day before the Germans had been very busy examining our luggage before our departure. Their usual method is to leave themselves about two hours to examine, say, one hundred bags; they then proceed, very methodically and carefully, to go through the first, searching minutely. They seldom manage to look at more than two, or at most three, in the first hour, but the fact that they have set themselves an impossible task never seems to dawn on their minds until more than half the time has been taken up. Then they become all excitement and flurry, and with a great deal of shouting and screaming at each other they rush through the remaining eighty or ninety bags at break-neck speed, the search degenerating into an absolute farce. This is their usual method, I saw it happen many times.

Digitized by Google

We started on this journey with very few guards; in fact, there were some compartments without one in at all. We naturally concluded that this was because we were *en route* for Holland.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI

ABOUT 4.30 in the evening we arrived at Holzminden.

The camp here is composed of two brick-built barracks with the usual double barbed wire surrounding it. The first thing we asked was, of course, when we were going to Holland.

"Holland?" the Germans said. "We don't know anything about Holland, this is a permanent British camp."

We anxiously explained that we had been picked out and were being sent to Holland.

"We know nothing about it," they said. "As far as we know, you will be here till the end of the war."

To say our spirits were dashed is to put it mildly. I honestly think that the whole thing was a ruse to convey eighty of us to this

Digitized by Google

camp in safety with a very small guard. They had probably received orders to send a certain number from Schwarmstedt to Holzminden, and having very few men available for a guard they hit upon this ingenious scheme to get us there in safety.

We were kept standing in the barrack square for four hours whilst the Germans took six of us at a time into a room and subjected us to a most thorough search, stripping us completely. However, they did not find much contraband, most of these prisoners had been in Germany for three years and what they did not know about hiding was not worth knowing.

The notorious German-American Niemeyer was camp officer here; he was afterwards made Commandant by Hänisch, no doubt he was a man after Hänisch's own heart! He had an extraordinary way of talking in very voluble bad English with a strong German-American accent, every sentence was filled with "you knows" and "you sees."

When we had been standing for about three hours on our first arrival at Holzminden—

Digitized by Google

and part of that time in the rain—and were very tired and rather miserable over the disappointment about Holland this odious man, full of smiles, said to us :

" Well now, gentlemen, I'm very sorry to keep you standing here you know, but I guess we'll soon be through now you know, and I've got a dinner keeping hot for you, gentlemen, such as you wouldn't get in Regent Street or Piccadilly."

One weary officer was ill-advised enough to murmur :

" You may think that funny, but the humour doesn't appeal to us."

Niemeyer, furious, asked for the remark to be repeated, so the officer gave it him again. He blustered and raved and shouted :

" Remember, you are not in England now, you are in Chermany."

Some one said :

" We are not likely to forget it."

More fury and shouts.

When at last we did get the " dinner," at about 9.30, it consisted of a slab of boiled dried haddock fished out by hand from an

Digitized by Google

enormous boiler and slapped on to each officer's plate as he filed past the German cook after standing for a long time in a queue. There were no knives, forks or spoons provided, so any prisoner who had not his own with him had to eat this objectionably served lump of fish with his fingers.

Here we soon found a mass of petty restrictions and regulations. The rooms were similar to those at Crefeld but, of course, in their original state of bareness, and there were no cupboards, only very small lockers on the wall just large enough to keep one's soap, etc., in. We had nothing in which to keep our clothes, as they would not allow us to have our bags or boxes in our rooms, but locked these up in an attic to which we were allowed access once a week.

The mattresses on the beds here were stuffed with wood shavings, I believe. The various stuffings I have had in Germany include hay, straw, wood shavings, reeds out of the river, seaweed and torn up newspapers. Straw is the best. There were no baths at this camp, though they said some were going to be built. We used two horse troughs in the

Digitized by Google

barrack square for bathing in, but, of course, there was no hot water.

Niemeyer made a very boastful speech to us on *Appell* one day, telling us that he knew all our tricks for escaping, and we should find it quite impossible to get out of his camp, etc. etc. This put us on our mettle, so before the next day's *Appell* two officers had left for home. He was very astonished and called in the local police and police dog to smell out the mystery. After a lengthy search they pushed the wretched hound down a drain; the animal, seeing a light at the other end and being pushed from behind, walked through the drain. This satisfied them: they had discovered the method of escape! They actually announced to us that they now knew how it was done, and spent the day busily filling up the drain. As a matter of fact, I doubt if it was big enough for a man to get down at all, and I do know for certain that it did not furnish the escape.

Some officers about this time were considering the best route for making a tunnel, and I read afterwards in the *Times* that the tunnel at this camp was successfully completed, and

Digitized by Google

that twenty-nine officers escaped through it. How many of these got over the frontier I don't know, but I wished them the best of luck.

About ten days after our arrival all the remaining prisoners from Schwarmstedt were brought in. They were very surprised to see us still here, as they expected to find that we had left for Holland. On the day they arrived the camp was being inspected by General von Pavlovski and we were shut up in our barracks. As the prisoners were marched in, we leant out of our windows and shouted warnings to them that they would be stripped and must hide their "stuff." We knew that the General and the Commandant, who were standing in the square, must hear these warnings too, but there was no other way. The result was that many compasses, etc., were found, but a great many were not!

Next morning before the barracks were unlocked we saw a band of "Landworms," as we always called the Landsturm men, very busy on their hands and knees searching for contraband on the grass plot where the prisoners had been standing the night before.

Digitized by Google

It was a ludicrous sight to see all these men with their noses on the ground scratching in the turf. If they had only had top hats on it would have made a perfect Heath Robinson picture.

One morning we were told that we owed 400 marks for missing property at Schwarmstedt. Our excellent S.B.O. asked for particulars. They gave us a list of stools, legs of stools, crockery and *beds!* The idea of anyone having such an affection for his dirty old sack of straw full of fleas as to bring it away with him was laughable. Of course we had not taken anything really and we objected to the charge. They said nothing more about it then, but when, later, we were leaving this camp they deducted from each man's account his share of the 400 marks. One was quite helpless in the matter at the time and could only make a protest which was useless. Each man's share did not come to very much individually, but the method of collecting it was eminently German.

They did not give us camp money at Holzminden, as they do at other camps, but issued a little account-book to each officer showing

Digitized by Google

his credit, and this book had to be debited by the man in the canteen for anything we bought. The first item on the debit side when we received the books was 1 mark for the book itself. But they had forgotten to rub out the shop price at which they had bought the books—this being 40 pf. So they made a profit of 60 pf. on each book; quite a considerable item when one considers the number of officer's who would eventually be sent to this camp.

After we had been here about a month some fifty of us were called out by name and sent off the next day to Heidelberg to be examined by the Swiss Medical Commission. I was one of these lucky ones. The twenty invalids picked out at Schwarmstedt for Holland were about equally divided—half were left at Holzminden and half sent to Heidelberg. I may say that all those left at Holzminden eventually came on to Heidelberg a couple of months later, and were examined by another Commission after we had left for Switzerland.

But at the time I was distinctly suspicious about this move. I had learnt, by this time,

Digitized by Google

to place no sort of reliance in anything the Germans said. On the day we left the camp was inspected by the notorious Hänisch, and it was on this occasion that Niemeyer was promoted from camp officer to Commandant in place of an old man who was in his second childhood—quite well-meaning but nothing but a figure-head. I heard afterwards that our S.B.O. at Holzminden, a major in the Wiltshires, got into trouble on that day because he stood up for our rights to Hänisch. This officer had also been S.B.O. at Schwarmstedt and had worked indefatigably for us all under great difficulties.

The position of S.B.O. in a prison camp is always a most unenviable one, as he has to spend most of his time bothering the Commandant for reforms of various kinds, and if he does his work energetically the German authorities naturally do not love him. He is also perpetually subjected to the criticisms of some of the prisoners themselves, who do not always realize the difficulties and who, by their behaviour, sometimes make matters a great deal harder for him than would otherwise be the case. He is held responsible

Digitized by Google

by the Germans for the discipline of the camp and the good behaviour of the prisoners, and altogether the position calls for a great deal of tact and patience.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII

WHEN we arrived at Heidelberg the camp was already very full. It consisted partly of brick barracks and partly of wooden huts of the same pattern as those at Karlsruhe, good strong huts with proper lavatory accommodation ; there were, however, ten of us in huts which were only meant to hold eight.

I was put into a hut which already contained nine French officers. The only British in the camp were those to be examined by the Swiss Commission, and a few newly captured officers.

Heidelberg, on the whole, is quite a good camp if it is not over-crowded. There is a fair amount of space, with four tennis courts, good shower baths, though, owing to the coal shortage, the hot baths were reduced to two a week. The private cooking arrangements are inadequate, and while I was there there

Digitized by Google

was very little coal, indeed not enough to heat the rooms properly, let alone cook our private food.

I have seen old senior French officers on their hands and knees digging up any likely little bits of fuel with a penknife out of the cinder paths. The best point about this camp was that the Germans did not unduly interfere with the prisoners: I think I felt freer in Heidelberg than in any other camp.

But the enormous advantage of this camp to me, as a Catholic, was that there were always a lot of French soldier priests among the officer prisoners. We had a beautiful little chapel, in which, of course, all these priests said Mass every day, and we had Benediction every evening. On Sundays there was High Mass at eleven. At one time there were as many as fifteen of these soldier priests in the camp in addition to three older priests who were army chaplains. I realized while I was at Heidelberg what a very large proportion of the French Army are good Catholics in spite of the Government being anti-Christian. The number at Mass and Benediction every week-day and the number

Digitized by Google

of daily communions made seemed astounding to an Englishman who is used to living in a Protestant country. This was noticeable, not only among the officers, but also among the privates, of whom there were a good many in the camp acting as orderlies.

Of course one also found many officers who belonged to the anti-clerical party. In my hut there were six Frenchmen who were Catholics, and three who were not.

We had a good many entertainments at this camp given both by the French and the British, but the French were undoubtedly the best. There was a cinematograph exhibition two nights a week run by French officers, and this helped to pass the time, though the pictures were anything but good: German films do not compare very well with French or British.

I was just starting to help in the production of a pantomime for Christmas, when, to my great joy, I and about one hundred and forty others left for Switzerland on November 27th. There had been two Swiss Commissions, one a day or two after we arrived at Heidelberg, and a second four weeks later. The names of those officers who had passed were read out a

Digitized by Google

few days later and we lived in hope of making a move every day. However, we were still very doubtful as to when we should actually leave for Switzerland, as there were at the camp many French officers who had passed a Commission five months before and were still waiting when we left.

I believe these men all came through shortly afterwards as, subsequently, I saw many of them in Switzerland. Whilst waiting to go before the second Commission many of us were attended by the German camp doctor, who was always courteous and painstaking.

This camp doctor was on duty some hours each morning and would see anyone who cared to consult him. During this time I also visited a dentist in the town; I shall always remember him as the most expensive and, at the same time, the most incompetent dentist I had ever been to. He had an unpleasant habit of giving you a long list of all sorts of things which he said it was absolutely necessary to do to your teeth, and if you were foolish enough to believe him he would then request payment for the whole business, no matter how many visits it might entail,

Digitized by Google

before he would make a start on anything. One had the unpleasant feeling that if you refused to have all he advised done he might "take it out of you" in some way. He wanted to take nearly all my teeth out and replace them with false ones. I declined, as an English dentist shortly before the war had told me on no account to have this done, and I was again advised by a first-class dentist on my arrival in Switzerland that this was not necessary.

Two or three of us used to go down together, on parole, to this dentist's consulting-room in Heidelberg, about twenty minutes' walk from the camp. We always had an unarmed "Landworm" with us to see that we were "not annoyed in any way." Sometimes he was old or lame and we would accidentally leave him fifty or a hundred yards behind, but the townspeople never took any notice of us at all. Some would look round as they passed with a slight interest to see three British officers strolling down their main thoroughfare, but as a rule we received no more attention than we should have done in a country town in England.

Digitized by Google

The only "manifestation" of any kind I ever experienced in the street was that occasionally a small urchin would stand in the gutter as we passed and, looking up with a cheeky expression, would say "Whisky, whisky," which I presume was supposed to be a topical allusion to an Englishman, as one might expect, under similar circumstances in this country, an urchin might call out "Sausage" as a German passed.

The whole behaviour of the civilians in Germany was totally different from what it was in 1914. This can only be accounted for by the undeniable fact that the bitter hatred against the English had died a natural death, though there was still, I think, a certain amount of Government-made official hate. I also consider that the indifference of the populace to the sight of British and other prisoners of war was due to the fact that the authorities were always moving them about, so that civilians saw officer prisoners very frequently, and also that the whole country was full of prisoners. The factories, mines workshops and land were all worked by them; they were therefore a common sight to every one.

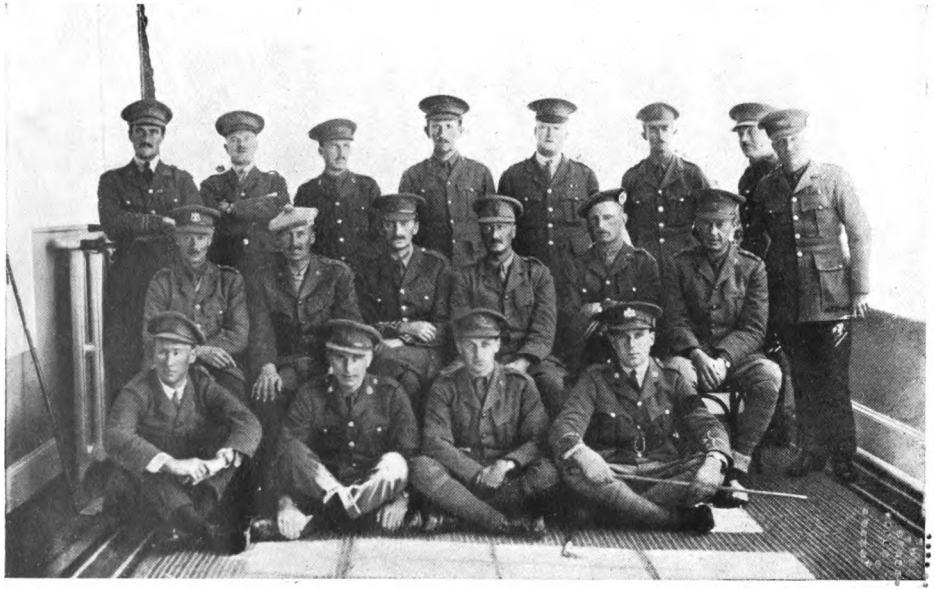
Digitized by Google

I don't think I ever saw a gang of men working on the railway line anywhere in Germany who were not prisoners of war.

At last the great day arrived for us to leave for Switzerland. We had the usual sort of very inadequate search made of our luggage, but we were told by the Germans to hand over everything in our possession that was disallowed as we should undergo a very thorough search at Constance, and if anything contraband, such as money or papers, was found on us it would not only be confiscated but it might even prevent our being sent through to Switzerland. They were very insistent about this, so much so that many of us thought that in all probability we should not be searched again at all, and so indeed it proved. We did not even get out of the train at Constance.

We were all lined up to go to the station on November 27th, 1917. As day was breaking we marched out of the camp and, for the last time, said good-bye to Heidelberg. This march was conducted by the usual "Land-worms" under a very Prussian looking *Feld-webel-Leutnant*. This man got very annoyed

Digitized by Google



BRITISH OFFICERS INTERNED AT MÜRREN, SWITZERLAND, 1918

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

because we would straggle and not keep in our fours. He halted the whole column and screamed at the top of his voice " Engländer—Schweinerei " ! It made such a characteristic send-off by the Boche as these were almost the last words addressed to us by our captors. Even when we were in the train we did not feel quite sure that we were really going to leave the hated Fatherland. Personally I could not help remembering the similar journey from Schwarmstedt, which ended up at Holzminden instead of Holland.

However, all went well this time, and before midnight we were actually across the frontier and had left Germany behind us at any rate for the duration of the war and, as far as I am concerned, for ever. It seemed like entering into a new life.

At our first stop the platform was lined with people cheering us to the echo and giving us little flags, flowers, cigarettes and chocolate. It was a great reception, everything seemed very strange and unreal. The same thing happened at Zurich and again at Berne. Although it was about 2 a.m. when we arrived at Berne we were welcomed by a large party

Digitized by Google

of English and friendly Swiss Red Cross workers. They had arranged a splendid meal for us, which was thoroughly enjoyed, but the best part was the feeling that at last we were among friends again. To the prisoner of war this means more than I can hope to put into words.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIII

BEFORE I close this little history, perhaps a few stories told me by other officers might prove interesting or amusing.

With all that has gone before I was myself more or less directly connected and, although I cannot vouch for the truth of the following incidents of prison life from personal knowledge at the time they happened, I have no reason to doubt the truth of them at all. As far as the first incident is concerned, I obtained confirmation of the story from other officers at a later date. Still, if any details should be inaccurate I must apologize to the officers to whom the adventures occurred and, in excuse, I can only say that I have repeated the stories exactly as they were told to me.

An escape was planned by two British

Digitized by Google

officers. The buildings of the camp they were in at the time consisted of stone or brick barracks, the windows of the rooms looked out over the open country. Beneath these windows was a deep dry brick-paved moat about fifteen or twenty feet wide. On the far side of this was a wall reaching up about twelve feet from the ground level, making with the depth of the moat a drop of about twenty-five or thirty feet. The rather wild plan of these two officers was to make a bridge by means of a plank from one of the windows to the top of the moat wall, to cross by this plank and drop down the other side of the wall. The sentries at this camp paraded up and down inside the moat, and there were none, or at any rate very few on the other side of the far wall.

Great care had to be taken in choosing the most suitable window from which to push the plank. It must be remembered that all prison camps were surrounded by powerful arc lamps, and the difficulty was to find the darkest spot and also, if possible, one overlooked by not more than one sentry. It was

Digitized by Google

a hundred to one that they would be seen as they crept along the plank, in which case the sentry would probably shoot.

The plans were all complete and the two officers proceeded to the room decided on as the only suitable one. Here they met with an unexpected check. They found the room was occupied by an officer, not of British nationality, who was about sixty years of age ; owing to his high rank he had been given the room to himself. For the purposes of this story we will call him Z. They tried to explain what they wanted to do and apologized for having to use his window for their exit, but, owing to the language difficulty, this explanation was perhaps not very clear. To their surprise he flatly refused to allow the use of his window, and all their pleadings and expostulations were in vain.

At last one of them, who was a very determined man, lost patience and said anyway they were going to do it whether he objected or not, so they started to get the plank ready to push out. This infuriated the old gentle-

Digitized by Google

man, who began to shout at the top of his voice. They were terrified that this would rouse the attention of the guard and, rushing to the bed, one of them put his hand over Z's mouth to stop the noise. He struggled violently and every time the hand was removed uttered the most ear-splitting yells. The two escaping officers were now desperate and, fearing every moment that the pandemonium would bring in the Germans, they rapidly tied the old gentleman up with a pair of braces and anything else they could find handy and pushed a pair of stockings into his mouth. This, perforce, quieted him, but he had shown the most surprising energy during these operations.

The next serious difficulty was caused by the discovery that the plank failed to reach the moat wall by about two feet. However, this was overcome by lowering a stout rope from the window above and slip-knotting it round the end of the plank, the other end being secured by other British officers in the room above.

Across this very insecure and shaky bridge

Digitized by Google

they crawled, jumping, when they reached the end of it, over the gap between the end of the plank and the wall on to the ground beyond and hurriedly making a bee-line for safety. Extraordinary as it may seem this mad adventure succeeded and they got clear away, though I do not think they managed to get over the frontier. As soon as they had both jumped the plank was hauled up by the helpers in the window above, but, as it was pulled straight, the other end came away from the window-sill, allowing the rope to slip off, and down the plank crashed into the moat below, missing by about a foot the head of a sleepy sentry was who standing below. This man, for some reason, had seen nothing of the escape going on over his head. Perhaps he was resting against the wall and was quite asleep, at any rate the fall of the plank effectually roused him from his dreams for, without waiting to see what it was that had so nearly brained him, he bolted down the moat as hard as he could, popping off his rifle as he ran.

This, at last, roused the guard, whose only knowledge of what had happened was that a

Digitized by Google

heavy plank had suddenly fallen into the moat like a bolt from the blue. Guessing, however, that there must be some cause for this phenomenon they proceeded to search that part of the barracks. Then they discovered that two British officers were missing and, more puzzling still, they found Z firmly tied to his bed apparently in the act of trying to swallow a pair of stockings.

They discovered nothing more.

Z, in spite of appearances to the contrary, proved a real sportsman and absolutely refused to give any explanation of the strange predicament in which he was found.

Another amusing escape story was told me which occurred some time before I was taken prisoner.

In this case the whole affair was carried out by Russian officers and happened in a camp which, before the war, had been a factory. In one of the rooms was noticed, high up on the wall, a sort of wooden box. The pieces of wood on the front of this were removed and it was found to contain a pulley wheel, round which a belt for driving machinery had

Digitized by Google

run. But what was more interesting was that this proved to be the entrance of some boxed-in shafting which led for some distance across an open passage into an adjoining building, and the important point was that this building itself lay outside the camp, i.e. on the other side of the barbed wire.

One of the Russians, in whose room this shaft was discovered, crawled up it to investigate. He came back with the news that the other end opened into the adjoining building and, most satisfactory of all, the building was unoccupied and empty. The news quickly spread among the other prisoners. Now it happened that this day was a national festival or something of the sort; at all events, whatever the cause, most of the Russians who heard the news had taken rather more of the Rhenish wine sold in the canteen than was exactly prudent. The result was that during the night a succession of more or less hilarious Russians crawled through the shaft and escaped through a window of the empty building.

Very few of these had made any preparations for escape, and it would have been

Digitized by Google

utterly impossible for them to do the many nights of weary marching to reach the frontier without either food, compass or a map. However, some had made proper preparations, and of these two did actually reach freedom, so the excellent means of escape which chance and the Germans' carelessness had provided for them was not entirely wasted.

About thirty of those who, in a spirit of light-heartedness caused by the wine, got out of the camp that night wandered about in the surrounding country, getting very tired, and eventually fell asleep in the fields ; waking up in the cold of the morning they wondered how it was they were sleeping out in the open and, feeling very hungry, wended their way back to the camp to see about breakfast. But they found it had been easier to get out than it was to get in. The sentries, apparently not guessing in the least who these strange-looking men were, ordered them off, and showed no intention of allowing them into the camp they were guarding.

If this should appear incredible to the reader, I can only remind him that Germany

Digitized by Google

is full of strangely dressed, curious-looking men from various occupied territories. Also that the outside guards at a barrack camp are not very familiar with the general appearance of the prisoners they are guarding.

So these poor things hung about, cold, tired, and hungry, until the Commandant had discovered that a great many of his birds had flown in the night, and, no doubt, received a report that a number of suspicious-looking men who could not speak German were hanging about outside apparently endeavouring to get into the camp. At last, the official difficulties were overcome and they were permitted to re-enter the prison.

When this story was told me it brought up a ludicrous picture before my mind—a sort of "Alice through the looking-glass" idea.

There is another little story about some Russian officers who escaped. They were recaptured a considerable distance from their point of departure and were taken to another camp. Here they were questioned by the Commandant, who was, in particular, anxious

Digitized by Google

to know how they obtained the civilian clothes they were wearing. They told him they did not know how these were obtained at all, that part of the plan having been arranged by another officer. This was perfectly true. The Commandant then said :

" Will you please tell me the name of that officer."

" Oh yes, certainly," they answered. " It was General —— " mentioning the name of a well-known Russian General who had been taken prisoner.

The Commandant seemed very astonished and said :

" Do you mean to tell me that General —— procured your civilian clothes for you ? "

" Yes," they assured him, " that is quite true."

He then proceeded to read them a lecture on the honour of a soldier, how it was perfectly honourable for a General to help his junior officers, in every way he could, to escape, but it was disgraceful that they should have betrayed him and given his name away. No German officer, he said, would think of be-

Digitized by Google

traying a comrade in that way, much less a superior officer, etc. etc.

He then rang up on the telephone the Commandant of the camp from which the Russians had escaped to tell him to put General —— under arrest on a charge of aiding and abetting prisoners to escape. The answer came back that General —— had himself escaped some weeks before and they had received news some time ago that he was in Petrograd.

The Commandant then understood why the officers had not objected to giving the name of their accomplice. He must have felt rather a fool when he thought of his high-flown lecture on honour.

One more Russian story—this time about cats.

At a certain camp some of the British officers had some cats as pets. These had increased to fairly large numbers, but they were all carefully looked after and treated as pets by their various owners.

It so happened that all the British were removed from this camp except three officers who were left behind in hospital I believe.

Digitized by Google

It was one of these who told me this story of what happened.

A certain Russian was asked to look after the cats and was given careful instructions as to their food, etc., but if they showed signs of moping and pining for their masters he was told they were to be destroyed, as their owners did not like the idea of their growing miserable and prowling about until they gradually got into a semi-wild state.

Now it must be borne in mind that the Russians do not get regular supplies of food from home as we do, nor have they quite the same prejudices with regard to certain articles of diet as we have. However that may be, the fact remains that first one and then another pussy was discovered to be unmistakably moping for its lost master.

An orderly would come to the room every few days, and solemnly announce that he thought Pinkie or Fluffy or one or other showed distinct signs of unhappiness, so the Russian officer would order the immediate execution of the unfortunate bereaved one. Suspiciously synchronising with these sad deaths occurred jovial supper-parties given

Digitized by Google

by the Russian officers, and on one occasion, when my informant was invited they had a delicious rabbit stew.

As time went on the remaining cats became very wild and difficult to catch however urgently their sympathizers sought to put an end to their heart-breaking grief for the loss of their masters. In fact, one or two wary old cats could not be induced by any means to look with a favourable eye on the kindly intentions of the Russians, so recourse was had to a ruse.

A piece of meat as bait was laid on the ground in the centre of a noose. The string of the noose was held by a man, wearing an old waterproof, who lay beside a heap of dead leaves, himself sprinkled with leaves to imitate another heap of rubbish. Still I fancy that a few remaining cats eluded all the wiles of the hungry hunter.

I have not written this little story of my experiences behind Boche bars to suggest that our life in Germany was all beer and skittles. It was nothing of the sort, but it would certainly not have improved matters if we had sat and moped.

Digitized by Google

If one had a sense of humour at all, the Germans usually supplied plenty of amusement though quite unintentionally. However, looking back at it now it all seems rather like a bad dream.

THE END

Digitized by Google

THE ROAD TO EN-DOR

By E. H. JONES, Lt., I.A.R.O.

With Illustrations by C. W. HILL, Lt., R.A.F.

Fifth Edition, 8s. 6d. net.

This book, besides telling an extraordinary story, will appeal to everyone who is interested in Spiritualism. The book reads like a wild romance, but it is authenticated in every detail by fellow-officers and official documents.

Morning Post.—"It is easily the most surprising story of the escape of prisoners of war which has yet appeared. . . . No more effective exposure of the methods of the medium has ever been written. . . . This book is indeed an invaluable reduction to absurdity of claims of the spiritualist coteries."

Times.—"Astounding . . . . of great value."

Daily Graphic.—"The most amazing story of the war."

Dundee Advertiser.—"The most amazing hoax of the war."

Daily Telegraph.—"This is one of the most realistic, grimmest, and at the same time most entertaining, books ever given to the public. . . . *The Road to En-Dor* is a book with a thrill on every page, is full of genuine adventure. . . . Everybody should read it."

Birmingham Post.—"The story of surely the most colossal 'fake' of modern times."

Evening News.—"The tale of the two lieutenants is perhaps the noblest example of the game and fine art of spoof that the world has ever seen, or ever will see . . . their wonderful and almost monstrous elaboration . . . an amazing story."

Glasgow Evening News.—"An absolutely fresh, unexpected, and inimitable true story of what we fancy is the greatest spoof of the Great War."

Everyman.—"One of the most amazing tales that we have ever read. The gradual augmentation of the spook's power is one of the most preposterous, the most laughable histories in the whole literature of spoofing. Lieut. Jones has given us a wonderful book—even a great book."

JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD, VIGO ST., W. 1.

Digitized by Google

THE ROAD TO EN-DOR

By E. H. JONES, Lt., I.A.R.O.

With Illustrations by C. W. HILL, Lt., R.A.F.

Fifth Edition. 8s. 6d. net.

Spectator.—"The reader who begins this book after dinner will probably be found at one o'clock in the morning still reading, with eyes goggling and mouth open, beside his cold grate."

Punch.—"It is the most extraordinary war-tale which has come my way. The author is a sound craftsman with a considerable sense of style and construction. His record of adventures is really astounding."

Country Life.—"More exciting than any novel. . . . . The book is a record of almost incredible courage and inventiveness."

Bystander.—"It is one of the most unexpected and engaging books for which the War has been responsible."

Pall Mall Gazette.—"A really entertaining account of a wonderfully successful and useful rag on an unusually big scale."

Westminster Gazette.—"Lieuts. Jones and Hill displayed an inventiveness, an ingenuity, and a patience worthy of the greatest admiration."

Outlook.—"The book deserves to become a classic."

Illustrated London News.—"It is an amazing story, humorously told, of a subtle and successful conspiracy to escape. But it is also a most telling indictment of the spiritualistic craze."

New Age.—"As a mere story of adventure and suffering the book is one of the most remarkable known to me; it is an epic of human ingenuity and human endurance."

Queen.—"Sensational and amazing . . . . absorbingly interesting."

Daily Mail.—"A really striking and diverting story."

JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD, VIGO ST., W. 1.

Digitized by Google

W. J. LOCKE'S NEW NOVEL

THE

HOUSE OF BALTAZAR

Second Large Edition, 7s. net.

Daily Telegraph.—"An entertaining story, very ingeniously contrived. . . . In John Baltazar there is real and original character-drawing. His abrupt changes of front, his glowing energy, his eager, impetuous heart, and his superb capacity for work make him a truly lovable figure."

Morning Post.—"The light touch is perhaps the most fortunate asset of a novelist, and Mr. Locke has it pre-eminent. It enables him to fashion a story which we read with pleasure. . . . Mr. Locke as a story-teller is both happy and lucky."

Pall Mall Gazette.—"Mr. Locke scores with 'The House of Baltazar' by giving us the full piquancy of the improbable and yet holding us deeply engrossed in the personalities of those who are involved in it. . . . Handled with fine discrimination."

Truth.—"'The House of Baltazar' has all the old charms which has won for Mr. Locke such popularity. It may be assured of the warmest of welcomes.'

Tatler.—"Very Locke-ish. There is a charm about the story which is very endearing."

Liverpool Courier.—"'The House of Baltazar' is a fine novel. . . . John Baltazar will pass into the glorious company of Marcus and Simon and Septimus and Paragot. We are glad, for Mr. Locke's picturesque heroes are among the few precious things left in modern English fiction."

Yorkshire Post.—"Most original in both its plot and its characters. John Baltazar is a very human personality . . . intensely lovable . . . a very delightful story."

Scotsman.—"The reader will retain the most enjoyable recollections.'

JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD, VIGO ST., W. 1.

Digitized by Google

re FIRST NOVELS

MR. JOHN LANE having had unparalleled success with Mr. LOCKE'S recent novel, THE HOUSE OF BALTAZAR (40,000 copies have already been sold), feels emboldened to present to the literary critic and the readers of Fiction the works of the four following new novelists:

THE STORY OF A NEW ZEALAND RIVER

By JANE MANDER. **8/6 net.**

THE GREAT LEVIATHAN

By D. A. BARKER. **7/- net.**

THE WATCH-DOG OF THE CROWN

A Romance of The Tower of London.

By JOHN KNIPE. **7/- net.**

THAT GIRL MARCH

By W. H. RAINSFORD. **7/- net.**

MR. LANE has recently published the following by two new novelists:

"Shuttered Doors," by Mrs. WILLIAM HICKS BEACH, and "Rachel Fitzpatrick," by LADY POORE. **7/- net each.**

Of late there has been much controversy over "First Novels" and the difficulty of their publication, from the established fact that loss to the publisher is practically inevitable, and Mr. Lane hopes that every reader of "BALTAZAR" will read the above books. These novels have been carefully selected from a mass of MSS. for their rare qualities—charm, originality and diversity. The publisher wishes to appeal to the critic, bookseller, librarian, and the reading public for justification of his enterprise, for without new writers the future would indeed be gloomy.

JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD, VIGO ST., W. 1.

Digitized by Google

A Scottish Nurse at Work

By HENRIETTA TAYLER

Illustrated. Crown 8vo. 5s. net.

A most interesting war record by a nurse who has seen service of an unusual kind—and whose picture of her varied experiences is animated, vivid, and always interesting.

It is manifest that the author is a woman of unusual pluck and endurance, grit and good temper. She manages to make us see and feel the strain and struggle of the doctors and nursing staff in hospital and with ambulances in Belgium, France, and Italy, to cope with the rush of wounded men—and she mixes in just the right amount of grim tragedy and daily humours which every worker in such hospitals witnessed.

Her experiences in Italy are of a quite exceptional kind, and her notes on the variety of prisoners and allies are most picturesque.

Paris in Shadow

By LEE HOLT

Author of "Green and Gay."

Crown 8vo. 7s. net.

Written in the form of a diary, the "author" of which takes a keen interest in the doings of his little world in Paris where he has lived so long. In this world he has a special place, unique perhaps among the foreign colony. Though a persona grata everywhere, his circle of real intimates is small. In the diary which follows he has noted down the trifling happenings of every day, those little events which more than all show the true spirit of the time. He writes from the standpoint of an American who has lived in France most of his life, but still retains a deep love of his own country. The book was not written in a spirit of criticism, but merely to describe the everyday Paris as it was in 1916–1917.

JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD, VIGO ST., W. 1.

Digitized by Google

The Squadroon

By ARDERN BEAMAN

Author of "Travels Without Baedeker."

Crown 8vo. 8s. 6d. net.

Excellent descriptions, humanly rich and full, of soldiers in action, and an intimate picture of the camaraderie of the officers. The book contains also several delightful character sketches, and though it is of course a war book, it will be read mainly for its human interest, in which it abounds to a very remarkable degree.

With the Serbs in Macedonia

By DOUGLAS WALSHE

Illustrated. Crown 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.

This is a very bright account of war experiences in Macedonia, by an A.S.C. officer, who has the gift of making his scenes, "living" scenes. Mr. Walshe's narrative is very human, and he gives us an excellent bird's-eye view of the country and the tangle of race inhabiting it.

Ward Tales

By E. CHIVERS DAVIES

Crown 8vo. 5s. net.

In this capital little record of V.A.D. work in a hospital Miss Davies combines very cleverly two points of view—the nurses' and hospital staff's, and the Tommies'. The author has humour, insight, sympathy, and a very quick eye for a situation, and in the course of her sketches she synthesizes the atmosphere and outlook of a big Military Hospital, especially as it appears to a V.A.D. Soldiers and others, will delight in the truthful and entertaining pictures of this admirable little book, as will all who have served, and are serving, in Hospital.

JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD, VIGO ST., W 1.

Digitized by Google

A PRISONER IN TURKEY

By JOHN STILL

Author of "Poems in Captivity," etc.

7s. 6d. net.

The author of this remarkable book was largely instrumental in conveying to the British Government by messages, in an ingenious code of his own invention sent at considerable personal risk, very valuable information regarding the treatment of British prisoners in Turkey. In this book, which is an account of the three years' imprisonment in Turkish hands, at Constantinople and at Afion Kara Hissar, Mr. Still gives a very forceful and vivid, but restrained account of the trials, sufferings and dangers through which he and his fellow prisoners passed.

A KUT PRISONER

By H. C. W. BISHOP

Illustrated. Crown 8vo. 6s. 6d. net.

More exciting than any fictitious tale of adventure. The main part of this book is occupied by the story of the author's escape, in company with three other British officers, from Kastamouni in Asia Minor. Mr. Bishop was captured at the fall of Kut, and his narrative includes a description of the appalling long march from Kut to Kastamouni, during which such a large proportion of our men succumbed to their sufferings, which were wilfully aggravated by their captors.

JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD, VIGO ST., W. 1.

Digitized by Google

War Diary of the 5th Seaforth Highlanders

By CAPTAIN D. SUTHERLAND

Illustrated. Crown 8vo. 6s. net.

The 5th Seaforths played an important part in the Great War, and Captain Sutherland, who was an officer of this battalion, has written a very careful and accurate record of their activities. But the book is more than a mere regimental record, for the author has added a really human interest to his narrative by the introduction of just the right amount of incident and by his own obvious interest in the fortunes of his battalion.

At Ypres with Best-Dunkley

By T. H. FLOYD

With map. Crown 8vo. 6s. net.

"At Ypres with Best-Dunkley" is a straightforward narrative, mainly compiled from the letters and diaries written by the author during the summer of 1917. It is perfectly candid and outspoken, and contains much matter which could not possibly have been published in war-time. The central figure in the book is the late Colonel Best-Dunkley, V.C., whose remarkable personality forms an edifying subject for analysis. The story covers a definite period in the annals of a great battalion and in the general history of the war, while it culminates in a natural and dramatic conclusion at the 3rd Battle of Ypres.

Four Months in Italy in War-Time

By BEATRICE THOMSON

Crown 8vo. 5s. net.

This book gives a remarkably clear idea of hospital life, and also of Italian character and ways. It is a fine record of service, and in its quiet restrained humanity it is a chronicle which deserves to be widely read. The author served for several months in a war hospital in Florence, and her sketches of her patients' characters and her record of their talk and behaviour gives us the real Italy.

JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD, VIGO ST., W. 1.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
3 9015 03091 3548

BOUND

JAN 8 1942

UNIV. OF MICH.
LIBRARY

Digitized by Google